NUMBER 21 $1.50

THE SPACE GAMER

FOR CREATIVE ADVENTURES

in this issue:

Dave Arneson interview

Spaceship Miniatures

How to run a MicroTournament

Odds in OGRE & G.E.V.

THE SPACE GAMER

FOR CREATIVE ADVENTURES

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, No. 21, 1979

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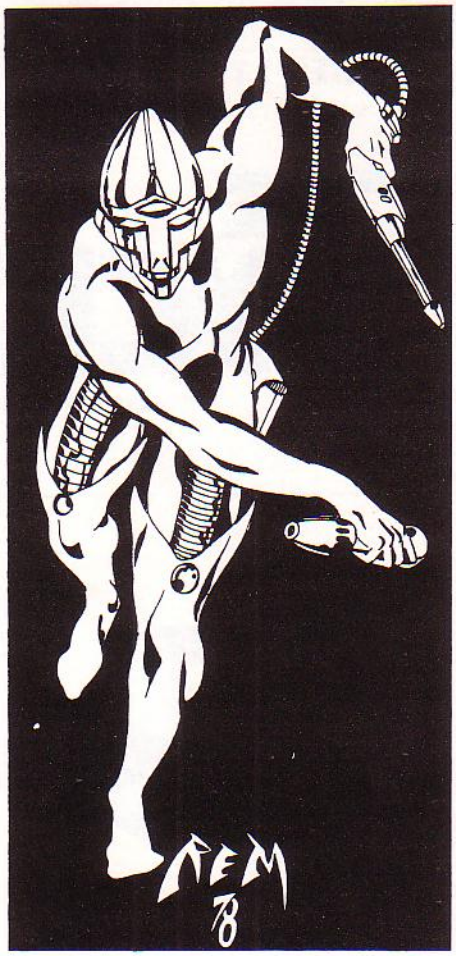

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THE SPACE GAMER is published bi-monthly by Metagaming, 3100-A Industrial Terrace, Austin, TX 78759. SUBSCRIPTION information, changes of address, orders, etc., to Metagaming, P.O. Box 15346, Austin, TX 78761.

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News items and product announcements subject to editorial whim. SUBSCRIPTIONS: six issues, $8; twelve issues, $15. Base rate for unsolicited manuscripts is one cent per word; they must be typed, double spaced, and contain return postage. Base rate for art is $20 per average page size; interior art should be black ink on heavy white paper. Application to mail at second-class rates is pending at Austin, Texas.

Where We're Going

Gaming has come a long way in the last few years. Most of the companies that have developed since 1972-1974 wouldn't be able to get a start in today's market. Quality of game design and packaging is much improved. In 1974, the market wasn't crowded and just beginning. Now, there are eight to ten established board wargame publishers turning out fair to excellent products. Metagaming wouldn't make it starting out in 1979.

As Metagaming has grown, we have less time to notice what our competitors do. Frankly, I don't know too much about their new releases. Our time is spent doing our own thing. We believe that as long as we complete innovative, quality game projects, we'll make it. We'd rather lead the field to new areas than follow by imitation. If we can imitate and do a better job, we will.

In a way we're competing with our own standards and expectations more than other firms. I'm glad when another company introduces a new concept or puts out a popular, quality game. That enhances the reputation and enjoyment of all gaming. I may wish we'd done it; but, we don't even have the time to do all our own interesting projects. If someone else can do it, more power to him.

The more contact I have with the hobby industry and other gaming companies, the more I realize Metagaming does things differently. Most of the industry, with some excellent exceptions, operate on little cash, paying bills late and cutting quality out of necessity. Metagaming pays cash as billed. Within a reasonable budget, our products get high quality marks. Our printer, box manufacturer and other suppliers get prompt payments. Deliveries go out rapidly.

The up-front approach and service orientation are taken for granted by us. The amazing thing is how many others don't take it for granted. It works for us in reducing hassles and getting good service. Having quality suppliers is one key of our success to date. Delivering quality products promptly is another. It seems obvious, but apparently, it isn't common.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

Metagaming sponsored two cash prize tournaments at WARCON V this year. Despite lower Con attendance than in previous years, the Metagaming tournaments were resounding successes. The combination of modest cash prizes and chess clocks in advanced rounds was experimental. It was successful in terms of interest and heightened competitive play.

Play style in the OGRE/G.E.V. tournament changed drastically with the time pressure of using chess clocks. Metagaming will continue to utilize chess clocks in tournament experiments. The goal is a set of rules and regulations for conducting tournaments. Event timing, judging, crowd control, record keeping, and area arrangement are matters of concern.

The value of continuing play of a game showed clearly in the STELLAR CONQUEST tournament. There are at least fifteen to twenty tournament-experienced SC players in Texas. The "new blood" went down very rapidly against the veterans.

Metagaming is tentatively planning a tournament in Austin for the summer. The format will depend on available man power for judging tournaments and handling administrative tasks. Cash prizes would be awarded in many events. Tournament winners would be asked to write strategy articles for THE SPACE GAMER. Open gaming space would be provided for non-tournament play.

The tournament is not planned as a typical convention. The only events aside from tournament gaming might be a few discussion panels with Metagaming staff. All the effort would go into running a good, tight series of tournaments first. Everything else would be secondary.

If you live in Texas and are willing to donate some hours as a judge, assistant, or gopher at a tournament, write: The Games Foundation; Box 40; Cedar Park, TX 78613. If interest in sufficient, we may form a Texas Gaming League with memberships and a complete organization. The Games Foundation is a Metagaming subsidiary controlling game development.

BOXED GAMES

STELLAR CONQUEST and GODSFIRE will be shipping by March 10, 1979. The huge bills for them arrive in April. Planned at the same time as these two were the boxes for THE FANTASY TRIP: IN THE LABYRINTH.

The last rules draft from Steve Jackson on TFT: ITL was received three weeks ago, consisting of 300+ pages of xeroxed notes. Believe me, Steve will never volunteer for a "Big" game project again. It has literally been two years out of his life plus thousands of hours of supporting effort.

All we can say about the huge delay is that the game will be worth the delay because of its playability. The price for this mountain of material and play aids will be either $19.95 (a "stripped" version) or $29.95. At $29.95 there would be a packet of 15mm fantasy Microtures included as class playing pieces in addition to the 720+ other board play counters. If you have any say at all about price, get it in now. The leaning here currently is toward the $29.95 Cadillac fantasy game,unmatched.

NEW MICROS

The next two scheduled Micros are HOLY WAR, tactical combat loosely based on GODSFIRE, and INVASION OF THE AIR EATERS. HOLY WAR is a Lynn Willis design with some very clever background and slick tactical wrinkles. HOLY WAR is for you if you've been wanting some space tactical play. Lynn shows further development of his premier talents in this one--don't miss it!

INVASION OF THE AIR EATERS is to my mind the best Micro we've published. I always wanted to publish a Micro with the entire world printed on a Micro map. The plot is '50's camp. Bug-eyed monsters invade earth and set up bases to convert our air into theirs--- die gasping, Terran scum! What is neat is that all the factors of nations, armies, technology, and invaders fit and work! It can even be multi-player or played solitaire with the invaders reacting in set patterns. I don't think we've ever given as much potential in a $2.95 MicroGame.

METAGAMING ASKS A FAVOR

About a year ago we aked our readers to ask their local toy, book, and hobby stores to carry Metagaming products. If a store is selling Avalon Hill or SPI products, then it can't miss with the MicroGames. If a bookshop has a good science fiction section, they can also sell MicroGames. Many of you sent us the names and addresses of local stores who eventually picked up our line.

So, we're again asking you to let your local toy, book, and hobby shops know that you like MicroGames. It sounds simple, but it works. The retailer survives by keeping you happy. If Metagaming products make you happy, he'll be interested. You're doing him a favor too--- Micros and THE SPACE GAMER do bring him new game customers.

.....Howard Thompson

THE FANTASY TRIP Microtures are made for use with Metagaming's THE FANTASY TRIP game system. Each package of Microtures is an assortment of quality metal fantasy figures. These figures are used to represent the heroes, heroines, fighters, wizards, sentients, monsters and animals from THE FANTASY TRIP.

THE FANTASY TRIP Microtures are supplied with optional hex bases. The hex bases are compatible with the facing and movement requirements of THE FANTASY TRIP combat system. When glued to the hex bases the figures are ready for fantasy adventure.

Metagaming already has several games published in THE FANTASY TRIP series.

THE FANTASY TRIP: MELEE $2.95 - man to man combat

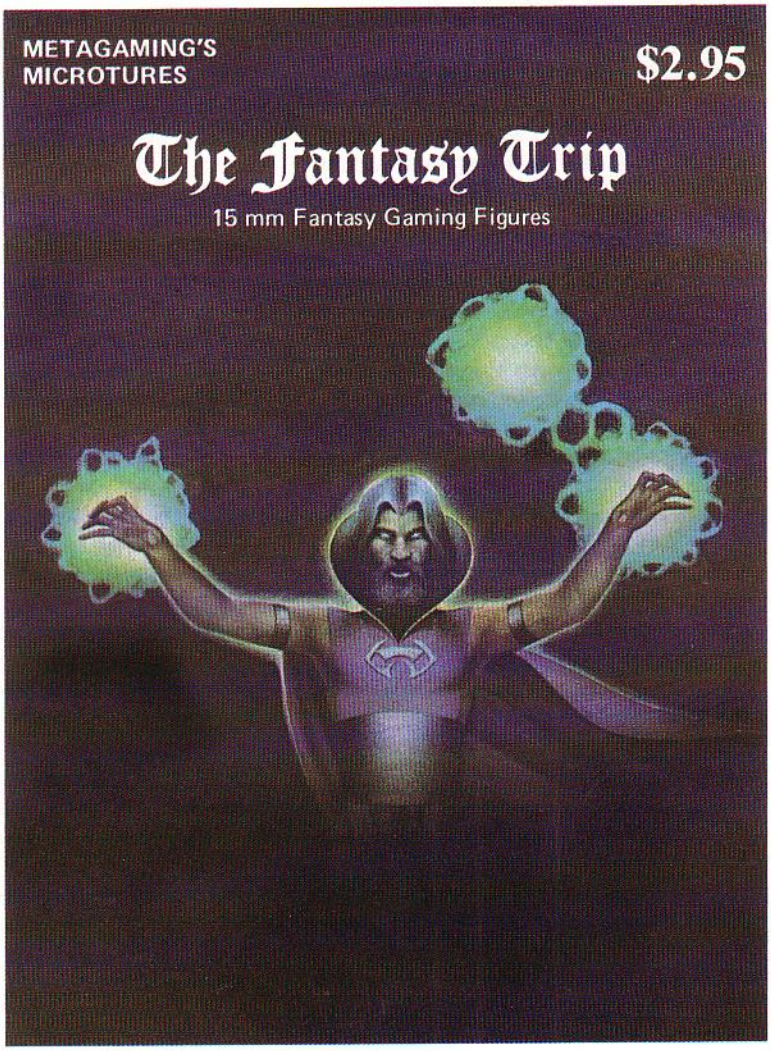
THE FANTASY TRIP: WIZARD $3.95 - magical combat

THE FANTASY TRIP: DEATH TEST $2.95 - an adventure

To be published in the near future are the Game Master's rule module for adventure campaigns.

THE FANTASY TRIP: IN THE LABYRINTH

While intended for use with THE FANTASY TRIP these Microtures are suitable for use with any fantasy game that uses figures. They are also useful, without bases, on terrain boards as fantasy armies.



TFT 1 Heroes & Heroines ($2.95)

TFT 2 Heroes & Magic Users ($2.95)

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TFT 4 Elves ($2.95)

TFT 5 Labyrinth Dwellers No.1 ($2.95)
(giant, ogre, bear, wolves, gargoyles)

TFT 6 Orcs No. 1- 6 swordsmen, 6 pole axe ($2.95)

TFT 7 Hobgoblins No. 1 - 6 swordsmen, 6 spears ($2.95)

TFT 8 One-hex Dragon ($2.95)

TFT 9 Orcs No. 2 - Bows & Crossbow ($2.95)

TFT 10 Hobgoblins No. 2 - 6 bows, 6 axes ($2.95)

TFT 11 Labyrinth Dwellers No. 2 ($2.95)
(spiders, scorpions, slimes, molds)

TFT 12 Seven-hex Dragon ($7.95)

OGR 1 OGRE MK *V* *($6.95)*

ORDER CONDITIONS

Due to the mailing weight of these Mircoture packages, they must be ordered subject to the following conditions:

1.) Three Microture packages or more is the minimum order. Orders for only one or two Microture packages will be returned.

2.) A postage and handling fee of $1.00 per order must accompany each order for Microtures.

3.) Subscribers to THE SPACE GAMER are exempt from the $1.00 postage and handling fee.

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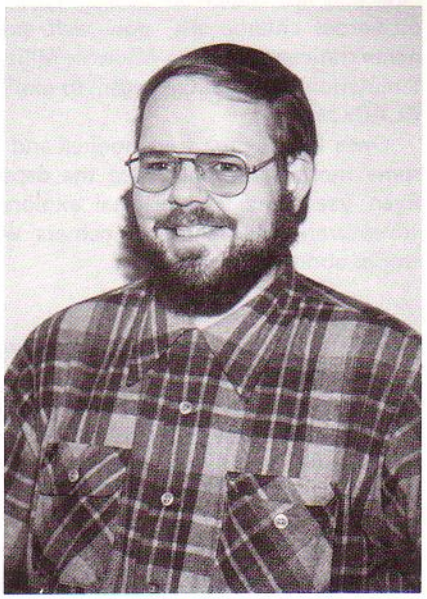
An Interview with Dave Arneson



(Editors Note: Dave Arneson is one of the men most responsible for the creation of fantasy gaming. He had a major role in the creation of the classic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, published by TSR Hobbies, Inc. Dave is an active freelance game designer residing in St. Paul. We look forward to seeing more of Dave's work in the future.)

THE SPACE GAMER: When did you start gaming in general?

ARNESON: I have gamed since the early 60's with Avalon Hill games and with miniatures since 1965. I came up with the usual "variants" and "new games" using existing systems and a few "mythical" campaigns, including a very gross 1984 game.

TSG: What sort of education and experience did you have that might have prepared you for game design?

ARNESON: My major in college was history with minors in ROTC and political science. I worked as a ticket seller at the state fair in the summer and, after graduation (and a 4-F from the Army) as a security guard. Other than the general knowledge that gets rubbed off on one while in school, that was my background. My games education just happened.

TSG: What were your earliest designs?

ARNESON: My first "published" work was DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP, written in the early 70's with Don Lowry. This was the result of a large Napoleonic miniatures campaign (which I refereed) for the local group. I feel this refereeing of the local Napoleonic campaign was what really provided me with the background and education that I needed when it came to games creation.

TSG: How did you get started in fantasy gaming? The original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules refer to the Castle and Crusade society.

ARNESON: My first fantasy game was a ridiculous affair where an elephant in an ANCIENTS game got fried by a phaser! I have the honor of being the referee who authorized that gambit. I survived the player riot quite well; of course, it was my table, troops, house, and I was heavily armed. Some time passed before I tried the fantasy bit again, however.

The Castle and Crusade Society was an offshoot of the old International Federation of Wargaming, now defunct. The C&C society was devoted to play with miniatures in a medieval setting. I was the assistant herald in the society. Its newsletter was a forum for articles on medieval weaponry, battle reports, games and a new "thing" called fantasy. The later was quite "traditional," being devoted to a few mentions of hobbits, combat factors, and the like.

The Society set up a mythical map where "kingdoms" were assigned to the "lords" of the Society and a society-wide campaign, using medievals was proposed, which never got anywhere. My DUNGEONS & DRAGONS co-author and Robert Kuntz were both active in running and setting up the C&C society.

TSG: There was also another Minneapolis club named.

ARNESON: The Minneapolis group known as the MMSA, Midwest Military Simulations Association, became active in the late 60's. It became the first recognized "wargame" Club at the University of Minnesota and at the College of St. Thomas.

TSG: How did you come to create that infamous first campaign, BLACKMOOR?

ARNESON: In the early part of the 70's our group was fully engaged in a far flung Napoleonic campaign which I refereed. One Saturday after reading several S&S novels, eating popcorn, and watching horror/monster movies all day, I designed a maze-like dungeon and populated it with orcs and similar beasties.

The next day my erstwhile emperors and czars arrived to view a table-top now dominated by my old Kibri castle

with scattered forests and a town. After several groans about trying something new (i.e. not Napoleonic), the first band of heroes entered the, now well worn, main staricase. So the Midwest Military Simulation Association began to explore BLACKMOOR.

Once begun they were hooked and for some months they plumbed the depths. Even years later the original explorers/ adventurers will regail all comers with stories about their exploits.

TSG: How did you meet Gary Gygax and Rob Kuntz?

ARNESON: I had met both of them years before at Gen Con III when I was selling some wooden ship models at the auction. I believe that was 1972.

TSG: How did your involvement with TSR Hobbies develop in those early days?

ARNESON: When TSR got going in 1974, it was strictly a Lake Geneva operation with Don Kaye (d. 1975) and my co-author, Gary Gygax. Don was the major money man at the time.

When business began expanding in 1975, due to D&D, it was planned that I, and others, would move to Lake Geneva in 1976 to help run things first hand. Up until that time, I was busy lining up EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE and DUNGEON for TSR, plus working on fantasy rules and games as well as on my own projects. My intention was to act as an agent in finding new and interesting projects for TSR. DUNGEON, FIGHT IN THE SKY, STAR EMPIRES, STAR PROBE, EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE, LEGIONS OF THE PETAL THRONE, and several others came to TSR from Minnesota people.

It was, however, GenCon that first brought us all together before there was any D&D or TSR.

TSG: Your name is carried as co-designer of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. How did you and Gary Gygax handle the work of a joint game design?

ARNESON: By phone and correspondence. There were also a couple weekends in Lake Geneva, but the final draft was done by phone and mail. I was not consulted on many aspects of the final work and in BLACKMOOR and FIRST FANTASY CAMPAIGN have tried to show where I would have liked DUNGEONS & DRAGONS to have gone. It is, however, an almost universal truth that game designers are rarely satisfied with the way their work comes out.

TSG: How was the final rules draft developed?

ARNESON: All editing on the final draft was done in Lake Geneva and I did not see it before it went to press. It was very much a case of me providing various ideas and concepts but not having any say as to how they were used. I am reluctant to say more due to the present legal situation.

TSG: What was your participation in the establishment of TSR?

ARNESON: I helped establish the company via DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. TSR would have folded in '75 with only CAVILIERS AND ROUNDHEADS and TRICOLOR in its inventory. With the games and people I helped line up for them, TSR got that boost it needed to get going. All the money in the world would not have given it the ten fold increase in size between '75 and '74. It was DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, EPT and hard workers like Carr (FITS) and Megarry (DUNGEON) that made it soar.

TSG: What is your current involvement, if any, with TSR?

ARNESON: My current involvement with TSR as a game designer is zero as it has been since 1976. I am a stockholder. I am also paid royalties for some of the work I have had published by TSR.

TSG: How active is your current fantasy gaming?

ARNESON: My current campaign, the first, has seen players in all parts of the country. It has been played twice at San Francisco, several times in Texas, many times in Wisconsin, and in other areas as well. It is still going and still contains many of the original players, if not their characters! On average, nowadays, we meet once a month if I am available. Most of the original group of dungeoneers that are still active now have their own dungeons, but these are not directly associated with BLACKMOOR.

TSG: How do you view the present state of fantasy role gaming?

ARNESON: The present state of fantasy gaming is chaotic and pretty confused at best. Of the vast amount of fantasy products out today, more than a few are trash and not worth the paper they're printed on. Yet, within even the most horrid product there can be found some useful facet that can be incorporated into an existing campaign. I am appalled at the overall flood of stuff and would have preferred a more orderly approach; but, the nature of the beast prevents that. Fantasy is imagination and most, I hesitate to say all, people's imaginations are different, just as each person is different. And, imaginations do tend to be unruly.

So what is the point? Is all this activity good or bad? I believe that it is a good and healthy sign that bodes well for the future. The junk will get thrown out and some equilibrium reached in times (at least I hope so!) to come. There is more to come, that's for sure folks!!

TSG: What is your current status with Heritage? Among other rumors, we'd heard you'd moved to Dallas. Are you an employee, freelance designer, under contract?

ARNESON: I am freelance. I publish with whom I please. I live in Minnesota where most of my friends and family reside at present. My agreement with Heritage is only a right of first refusal and nothing more. Mostly they have refused. I also found a few titles for them and edited some rules, all on a fee basis. Thus, at this time, my involvement is minimal and I am not an employee.

TSG: Does your association with Heritage indicate some sort of break with TSR and Gary Gygax? Our rumor sources indicate lawsuits and other animosity between the two firms.

ARNESON: As I said I am not directly working for any particular company.

I am at present involved in a legal suit with TSR Hobbies over DUNGEONS & DRAGONS royalties. Beyond that I am not free to comment on my relations with TSR to any great extent.

TSR and Heritage settled their case over the use of the words DUNGEONS & DRAGONS in Heritage's advertising. Heritage won. Beyond court costs, no major money was involved, that I know of. There is no love lost between the two. I understand that the case may be reopening soon.

TSG: Do you have any involvement with Judges Guild or any other gaming companies?

ARNESON: With Chaosium, Fantasy Games Unlimited, Discovery Games, and Adventures Unlimited (my own tax shelter and company!), plus 4D Interactive Systems, a Rochester Minnesota computer company.

TSG: Do you have new game designs in the works now?

ARNESON: SAMURAI (Chaosium or Heritage)

ADVENTURES IN FANTASY (Heritage or Fantasy Games)

GUIDE TO FANTASY (Heritage)

KING SOLOMON'S MINES (Discovery Games), supplement to Source of the Nile.

ISLAND OF THE WOLF (Judges Guild), D&D playing aid

CITY OF THE GODS (Judges Guild), D&D playing aid

There are also several less advanced projects.

TSG: Do you see yourself making a living from gaming?

ARNESON: I am making a living from gaming, not much but nice. Of course, being a bachelor helps!

TSG: What do you hope to do in gaming over the next five or ten years?

ARNESON: Computer and video games are where the game industry is going, with a vengeance!! I hope to increase the emphasis on role playing adventure games and get away from the purely fantasy type games. I especially want to get players away from the emphasis on booty and high body counts.

TSG: Do you view yourself as a miniatures gamer more than a board gamer? How do you view the differences between the two?

ARNESON: Miniatures! A miniature by its very nature requires more preparation and care. That affects the whole viewpoint and outlook of the players. The miniatures provide players with a more easily grasped 3D picture of what is going on and lets them identify with it more readily.

TSG: Most gamers have their ups and downs. What was your single biggest disappointment as a gamer?

ARNESON: When I saw what was happening at TSR and was forced to leave. I had very great hopes, as we all did at the start, for setting the hobby on its ear. It was sad to see the paper mache facade put up in place of steel and brick.

As a game participant it was the ending of a Civil War campaign in which I was a reb. Mostly because I was having a ball playing in a miniatures' campaign, my first in years, and I was winning!! On to St. Louis!!! The poor referee just ran out of time and steam. He was doing a great job though and I loved playing for a change.

TSG: Do you feel that game designers should receive game awards?

ARNESON: Yes! Writers win them for their books! Ball players win awards! So why are game designers different, you tell me.

ARNESON: What is Metagaming's postion?

TSG: Metagaming feels that gaming should give awards to designers. The designers may become confused in some companies that have group efforts, but designer awards are preferable. Companies receive their reward at the bottom of income statements.

TSG: What would you think of separate designer and company awards?

ARNESON: Fine, but make it clear who is getting an award for what and why, for superior marketing or doing a good game.

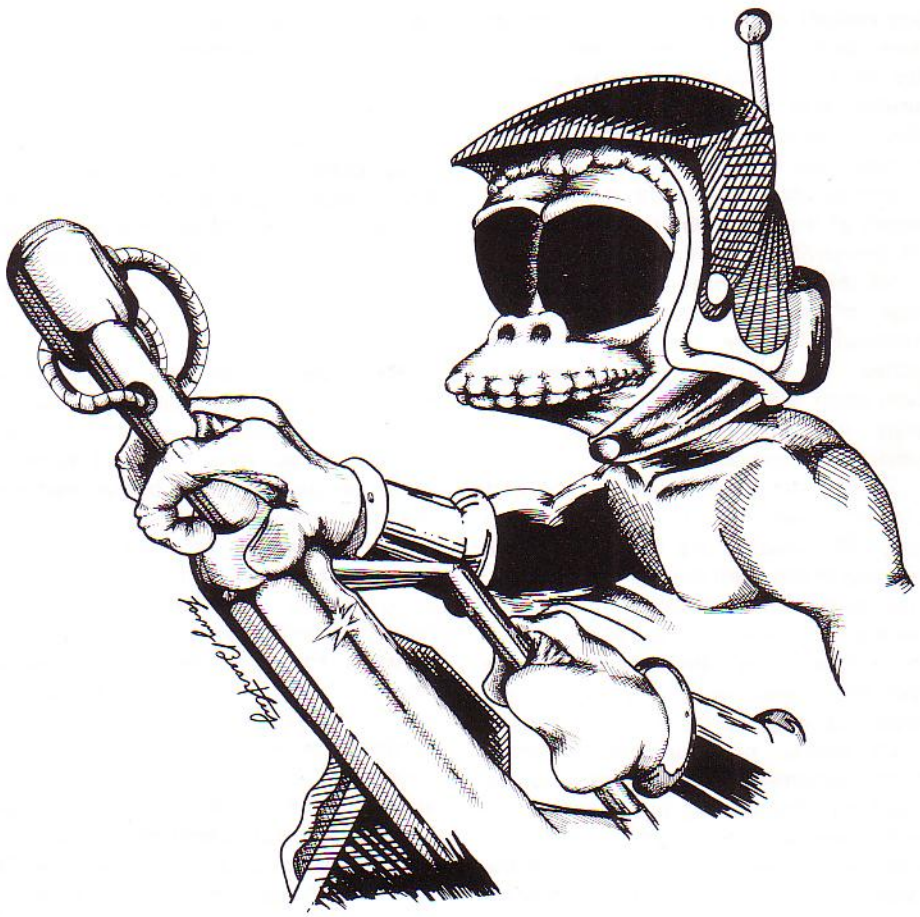
TSG: You have been involved in a dispute over the Charles Roberts awards and H.G. Wells awards. What led to the dispute?

ARNESON: At the awards ceremony I went up to receive the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS awards. This was disputed by a represenative of TSR at the ceremony. As a result, I only received one of the awards won by DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, the rest going to TSR. After the ceremony, TSR protested to the people running the convention that I return the award. The convention people then asked me to return the award, stating that the awards went to the publishers, not the designers of the games which win.

I refused to return the award. I stated that (1) no one had ever announced that companies, not designers are winners, and (2) it seemed grossly unreasonable that the publisher of say "Lord of the Rings" would receive literary awards for the book and not the author. I sent off a protest to Simulations Publications, Inc., Avalon Hill, Metro Detroit Gamers, and John Mansfield, all of whom were involved in the awards ceremony.

MDG made up an award for TSR, but otherwise never replied to me. AH said it was right that companies were the ones to receive the awards. SPI called and said that next year awards would go to both the company and the designer. Mansfield also indicated that there would be changes next year.

As to my getting any of this year's award, SPI and MDG said that there was not much chance (i.e. tough luck, but aren't you happy it will be different in the future!).



You, Too, Can run A MicroTournament
or
Small Games, Small Headaches

by

Guy W. McLimore, Jr.
Tournament Director
Ohio Valley Wargaming Association

If you are a member of a wargaming club, chances are you've talked about holding a tournament. And, if your club is like most clubs, all you've done is talk, because talk is the only easy part of tournament planning.

Realistically speaking, tournaments are a big, big job. Over half the problem is caused by the big, big nature of many wargames. Games take time to learn, and time to play. The complex nature of most wargames multiplies the hassles in planning a tournament. Long, complex games require more referees and a larger tournament site which can be used for long periods of time (sometimes two or three days). More complicated games also limit participation to those players familiar with that game. Even gamers who are familiar with a game may back off from tournament play. They may not be comfortable enough with it, or are too unsure of their own abilities in gaming to risk competition in any "official" way.

All this leaves most clubs at the talk stage of tournaments. Few gaming organizations have the personnel and money to overcome the problems. Even when conventions are held, they are really not a place for inexperienced gamers to be competing.

Then, enter the MicroGame, and exit a lot of problems for tournament organizers. MicroGames are fast, and even a new player can learn how to play quickly. This means fewer judges and less time needed for a tourney. Micros are perfect for a small club's first tournament, or even for a small, quick, fun event for a larger club with tournament experience.

Of course, no tournament, even a Microtournament, is a total snap to put together. (Sorry, gang, but there ain't no such thing as a free lunch. . .). But, a Microtournament eliminates many of the usual problems so a tournament director can concentrate on other, important points. As for the problems, perhaps a few hints can minimize them.

The absolute first thing one should do when it has been decided to hold a Microtournament is select and reserve a tournament site. Select and **reserve** (note the emphasis. . .)! In planning their recent Microtournament, the Ohio Valley Wargaming Association discovered at the last minute that their "reserved" site wasn't reserved after all, necessitating a last-minute change in location. All turned out for the best, as the second site was far superior to the original, but it could have been very embarrassing. (Wasn't it nice of us to make mistakes so you could avoid them. . .?)

When picking a tournament site, cost will probably be the major factor. Start checking with local colleges and universities, community centers, organizations like veterans' groups or armed forces reserve units, etc. Many of theses groups have meeting rooms or auditoriums that a club can get cheap (or even free) with a little explanation and PR about wargaming.

Remember, your site should have plenty of tables and chairs available. It should be relatively quiet and apart from non-gaming activities. (Yes, I know it won't be quiet for long, but at least you can limit the amount of noise from nearby non-gaming activities.) It would be nice if snacks and drinks (at least a soft drink machine) were available nearby. Gamers get hungry and thirsty between rounds. Parking and accessibility of the site to area gamers is another consideration to make.

What games you play should be determined by what is popular in your area. MELEE and WIZARD are especially good for tournament play, since they are simulations of arena combat. OGRE and G.E.V. can be played tournament style as well. Try combining the two games into one tournament, starting the first round with the basic scenario or OGRE and adding more units and optional rules for each successive round of eliminations.

In fact, there are no bad choices among the Metagaming MicroGames. All are quick-play games lending themselves to elimination play. Try for a variety of game styles, mixing fantasy and science fiction.

Of course, there must be something for the winners. Your local hobby shop or bookstore that sells MicroGames is the first place your club should look for help in providing prizes. Most likely, the owner will be all too happy to provide some prizes for the tournament. (If it is a large shop, there might be room to hold the event right there.) Be sure and support your "sponsor" by mentioning his generosity on posters and in news releases and the tournament program.

This brings the discussion neatly around to publicity. This may be the single most important area of planning, since it is publicity that will determine the final success or lack thereof of your Microtournament. It is important to get the word out as soon as plans (site, games, prizes, etc.) are finalized for the event. Start with posters in local wargame shops, on college campuses, and other places where gamers (and potential gamers among the SF/fantasy fans) get together. Also, prepare notices (typed, double-spaced, and NEAT, please!) for wargaming publications that run tournament information. Include all important information about the event, plus the address and phone number of the tournament director. If there is an entry fee (and there should be at least a token fee--50 cents to $1 is plenty), be sure and list that, too. Don't forget that magazines have a "lead time" of several months. You must plan to get your news releases

in at least 3 to 4 months before the event, if you expect them printed in time.

Metagaming and the TSG staff were of tremendous help with the publicity for the Ohio Valley Microtournament, publishing tournament notices in TSG's *News and Plugs* column and even allowing the use of their copyrighted advertising art--with proper copyright notices attached--in publicity posters.

Publicity should build slowly to a peak about one week before the event. If the publicity effort peaks too soon, the gamers have time to forget about the whole thing before the day of the event. Send local newspaper and broadcast releases out about a week before the event. Do go back about this time and make sure the posters you put up are still where you put them. Replace posters that have fallen or been removed. Ask your hobby shop/bookstore to stuff a small flyer about the event in with every game or SF-related purchase during this last week.

For the tournament itself, your most important resource is your group of judges. Judges should *not* be playing in tournament rounds to protect their impartiality. Post the official rules early (in the case of MELEE, OGRE and possibly other games, note which printing of the rules is being officially adopted) and be sure to post any "house rules" you will be using. In the case of a dispute, the game referee or judge has the final say. Final! A tournament director or sponsor should keep his mouth firmly *shut*, and stand behind a judge's decision, even if the director or sponsor is not in total agreement. For this reason, choose only judges who are cool-headed and reasonable.

Judges should settle disputes with quiet dignity, tact, and firmness. Don't argue, just state your decision and the reasoning behind it. Then, stick with it. Most gamers are rugged individualists, but they respect the voice of authority if handled rationally. In those rare cases where a gamer exhibits extremely poor sportsmanship, don't let him/her spoil everyone else's fun. Show him/her the door.

With Micros, several different tournament rounds may be going at the same time if allowances are made for those gamers who may be entered in two or more events. Inevitably, there will be times when players will be "between rounds" with time to kill. Of course, there should be a lot of open gaming going on. (Try the "Let's you and him fight" ploy on two gamers who have never met. There is no faster way to make friends than to be enemies across a game table.) It doesn't hurt to have a few extra things planned as well. The Ohio Valley event featured a demonstration of computer games on the Bally ARCADE and Radio Shack TRS-80. Also, a local dealer had a display and sales table set up. Your club may even want to sell things to raise money. Try a used game auction or a bunch of buttons with wargame/SF/fantasy-oriented sayings. (My favorite is "Wargamers do it at 3-to-1!")

A little bit of pomp and circumstance when presenting the winners with prizes and trophies is quite appropriate. Make sure to send out press releases identifying winners-- good play deserves recognition.

These are just a few guidelines for Microtournament organization. Each individual sponsoring group will have their own set of special problems to work out. Just remember the cardinal rule of tournament planning-- games are for having fun. If you have fun planning, and plan so the players have fun playing, things will go smoothly.

The MicroGame is perfect for tournament play, and the Microtournament is perfect for a club's first event. Give it a try, and you may find tournaments aren't the impossible task they seem to be. (Believe me, if we did it, so can you!)

Playing the Odds at OGRE & G.E.V.

by

Roland Parenteau

From the time you first play a solitaire game of OGRE, you know it's one game in which you throw the dice *a lot.* Because the two games are so similar, you quickly find out the same thing about G.E.V.

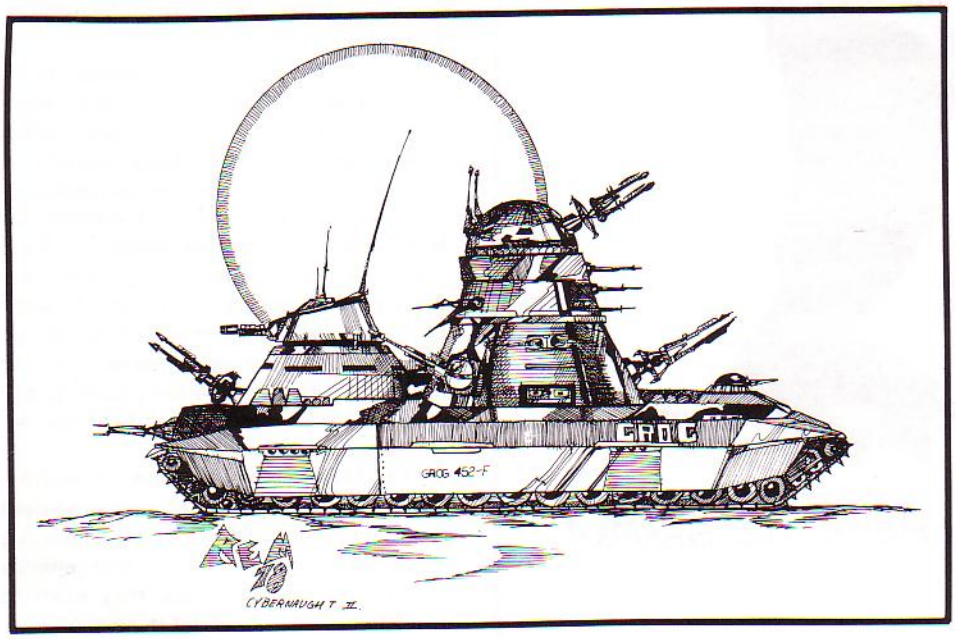
If you are a newcomer to wargaming, you might think any game in which you throw the dice so much is ruled by luck. The judgment is understandable, but not true.

In fact, OGRE and G.E.V. are probably less ruled by chance than many other games that rely on dice for combat resolution. The law of averages favors the evening of die rolls over the course of any game where that die is thrown many times. The more often you roll the die, the more likely it is that you will get as many high numbers as low ones, as many even numbers as odd, etc.

This does *not* mean bad throws early in a game are likely to be followed by good throws later. It merely indicates that games with a high number of die rolls will have a higher likelihood of giving each player equal treatment than in games in which the die is rolled only a few times.

All this talk of die-rolling means two things for the wargamer: 1) except in rare cases, the player who plays most skillfully *will* win the game; and 2) a player who can use probabilities better than his opponent will have a substantial advantage in the long run.

OGRE and G.E.V. both give each player ample opportunity to use his knowledge of probabilities. Take the common problem of how to allocate attacks to inflict the maximum expected damage on an enemy target for a given firepower. For example, a player is often faced with the decision of whether to attack one enemy unit with one 2-1 attack, or to attack the same target two times (with different units, of course) at 1-1 each. Which is the better attack?



The answer is two 1-1 shots. How do you figure? Let's go over the procedure.

On a sheet of paper, list the 36 combinations in which two dice can be thrown (1/1, 1/2, . . .,6/6). For each combination, pretend that each number is a die roll resolving a 1-1 attack, and write down the result of two combined 1-1 attacks on the unit. (For the sake of argument, let's suppose the target is an armored, non-OGRE unit.)

The combination 1/1, therefore, would have an effect of NE, while a combination 3/4 would have an X effect. (The 3 would bring a D result, and the 4 would bring another D result on top of the already disabled unit.)

Follow this procedure for armored units, then repeat it for infantry units and again for OGREs, remembering the different handling of D combat results for each unit type (infantry units are not disabled by D results, but simply lose one step-- OGREs ignore D results altogether). When you are finished, add up the number of X, D, and NE results.

What you find may surprise you. While a single 2-1 attack against an armored unit gives a 50% chance of X, a 33% chance of D, and a 17% chance of NE, two 1-1 attacks give a 67% chance of X, a 22% chance of D, and only an 11% chance of an NE result. That means two 1-1 attacks have a better chance of destroying the unit outright than a 2-1 attack, and less chance of missing.

Results with other units are almost as favorable. With infantry as the target,

two 1-1 attacks give a 56% chance of X, an 11% chance of two D's, a 22% chance of obtaining a single D, and an 11% chance of NE. Against an OGRE, two 1-1 attacks have a 56% chance of an X, compared to a 50% chance with the 2-1 attack alone.

Even these numbers do not tell the whole story. Splitting the 2-1 attack into two 1-1's gives the attacker a chance to destroy the target with the first shot, thereby saving some firepower for another target. Against infantry units, there is also the possibility of obtaining two consecutive D results, reducing a target unit from a "3" to a "1".

After obtaining these interesting results for two 1-1's vs. a single 2-1 attack, I investigated some other possible combinations an OGRE or G.E.V. player might be tempted to try. The results are shown in the accompanying table.

Obviously, not all the combinations proved to be as favorable for the player who wants to use the "spread-out-the-attack" strategy. Still, it helps to know those percentages. Also keep in mind that the percentages given in the table are the chances of obtaining a particular result on a given target for the overall combination of attacks, or for the single attack to which the combination is compared. Inconducting several attacks, there is always the possibility that an X result will be obtained on an early shot. This must be considered, along with the urgency of your position, in apportioning attacks.

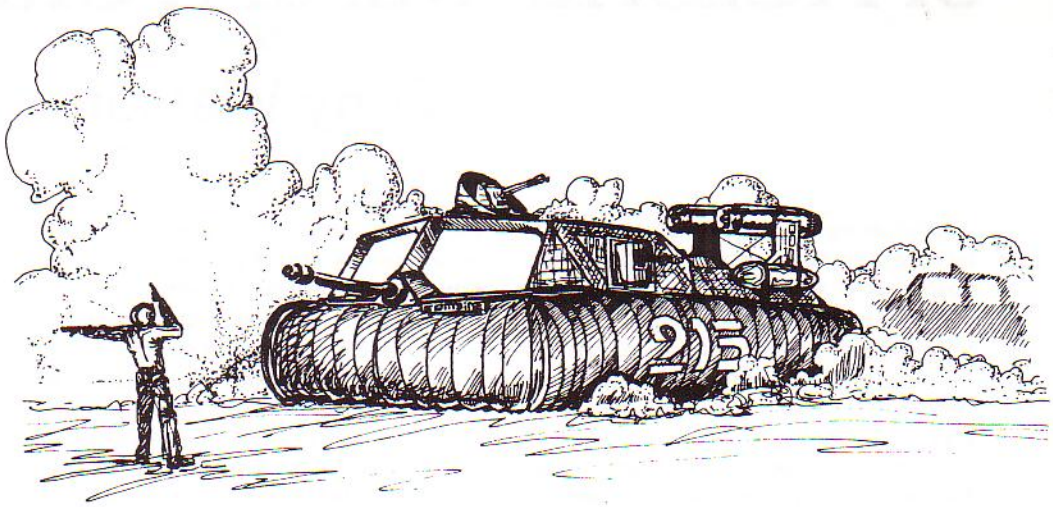
It can be shown mathematically that, in evaluating combinations of attacks involving two different odds (the 2-1 and 1-1 vs. the 3-1, the 1-2 and 1-1 vs. the 2-1), the order of attacks makes no difference; the chances of obtaining X, D, and NE results remain exactly the same.

Assessments of the effectiveness of each combination attack in place of the single attack to which it is compared follow.

Two 1-1's vs. one 2-1: Two 1-1 attacks are equal or better on every count, against every target.

Two 1-2's vs. one 1-1: The two 1-2 attacks come close, but are slightly less favorable than the single 1-1 attack.

Two 2-1's vs. one 4-1: Percentages favor the 4-1, but not by much. The big difference is that two 2-1's give you a small chance of missing entirely, whereas the 4-1 gives you none. Two 2-1's would be an intelligent choice where you want to economize firepower.



1-2 and 1-1 vs. 2-1: The 2-1 attack is better.

2-1 and 1-1 vs. 3-1: If target is an armored unit, you are better off spreading out the attack. If target is an infantry or OGRE unit, the 3-1 attack is better.

Three 1-1's vs. one 3-1: If the target is armor or infantry, three 1-1's are definitely better. If target is an OGRE, the 3-1 is just slightly better-- but since *two* 1-1 shots give nearly a fifty percent chance of destroying the target, three 1-1's might still be an attractive option.

Three 1-2's vs. one 2-1: The three 1-2's are not to be tried.

CHANCE (%) OF OBTAINING GIVEN RESULT THROUGH ATTACK COMBINATIONS AND SINGLE ATTACKS

Target is:	ARMOR			INFANTRY				OGRE	
	X	D	NE	X	-2	-1	NE	X	NE
Two 1-1's	67	22	11	56	11	22	11	56	44
vs. one 2-1	50	33	17	50	0	33	17	50	50
Two 1-2's	*33*	*22*	*44*	*31*	*3*	*22*	*44*	*31*	*69*
vs. one 1-1	*33*	*33*	*33*	*33*	*0*	*33*	*33*	*33*	*67*
Two 2-1's	86	11	3	75	11	11	3	75	25
vs. one 4-1	83	17	0	83	0	17	0	83	17
1-2/1-1	*50*	*28*	*22*	*44*	*6*	*28*	*22*	*44*	*56*
vs. one 2-1	*50*	*33*	*17*	*50*	*0*	*33*	*17*	*50*	*50*
2-1/1-1	78	17	6	67	11	17	6	50	50
vs. one 3-1	67	33	0	67	0	33	0	67	33
Three 1-1's	*85*	*11*	*4*	*74*	*11*	*11*	*4*	*65*	*35*
vs. one 3-1	*67*	*33*	*0*	*67*	*0*	*33*	*0*	*67*	*33*
Three 1-2's	48	22	30	43	6	22	30	42	58
vs. one 2-1	50	33	17	50	0	33	17	50	50

Figures shown are percentage chances of obtaining a given result.

SPACESHIP MINIATURES & RULES

by

Tony Watson

Wargaming has traditionally been split into two broad categories: the familiar board game with (usually) a map and cardboard counters, and miniatures, gaming which utilizes miniature castings of metal or plastic and is played without benefit of hexgrid, on any large, flat area.

It has only been recently that Science-Fiction gaming has become popular enough to warrant its own, specialized lines of miniatures. The general rise in popularity of the SF gaming genre has led, in just the last few years, to a proliferation of miniatures lines dealing with the subject. While both tactical surface combat (ala STARSHIP TROOPERS) and ship to ship fighting now have representative pieces available, the scope of this article allows me to deal only with the latter.

Spaceship miniatures offer considerable interest because unlike tactical infantry figures which are restricted for a number of reasons, (the foremost most being anatomical considerations), more artistic license is allowed. Some of the designs presently offered are quite impressive, both in general design and individual detail.

Coupled with the increase in ship models available are the rules to go with them. In some cases, the rules are designed to be used with a certain line of models, while others are more general and can be adopted for any models.

Some rules deal with science fiction sources familiar to us such as TV's *Star Trek*. Gamescience's STARFLEET BATTLE MANUAL is the culmination of a number of years' work in the miniatures field by its designer, Lou Zocchi. It is a third generation game, using and building on the system first pioneered in THE STAR TREK BATTLE MANUAL and later, refined in ALIEN SPACE. The first game was sold without any license from Paramount, a situation the production company quickly remedied by threatening to sue if any more copies were sold. (This, incidently, made the game something of a collector's item.) Not long after, Zocchi came out with ALIEN SPACE, an expanded game using the same basic system as the ill-fated STAR TREK game. Then, in 1976, the final rules offering appeared, with a return to the *Star Trek* theme, but this time with Paramount's blessing.

As far as the rules system goes, the STARFLEET BATTLE MANUAL carries on the traditions of the first games. Each ship has a record sheet covered in plastic and to be written on with a grease pencil. Per-turn power allocations from the engines are distributed between shields, phasers (or other weapons in the case of ALIEN SPACE), torpedoes, sensing, life support and movement. The STAR TREK game allows for shields in different quadrants to be set at different power levels. Combat is handled uniquely, in that each ship has a square, 3"x3" cardstock template with a 0 to 360 compass described around it, and a five foot length of string fixed to the center. The firing player calls out a degree heading and stretches the string out along it; if it crosses an opposing ship there is a hit and phaser power is compared to shields to determine damage.

The game rules are good, and give an accurate feel for the *Star Trek* setting. There is enough detail in the rules that each player can have an enjoyable game captaining one or two ships. More players can easily be fitted in by using multi-commanders per side.

Miniatures are available only for the STARFLEET game. They are of plastic and about two inches long. Detail is minor, but then the ships in the series were rather smooth hulled. Each comes with pylon for mounting. Pieces in the set are four types of Federation craft: scout, destroyer, dreadnought and crusier, a Klingon battle-crusier, Romulan Bird of Prey and a Tholian. Models range in price from $2 to $3. It should be noted however, that the templates mentioned above are the only thing essential to the play of the game; one could easily forgo the ship models if he wished, though they do add considerable visual appeal.

Also based on *Star Trek* (but not coming right out and saying it) is Wee Warriors' THE EMBATTLED TREK. Like the Gamescience rules, cardstock ships are included, being incredibly baroque in design. The rules are fairly simple, only three pages long, and once again depend on energy allocation among various ship systems.

Two companies offer complete miniatures systems (ship models and coordinated rules sets.) The oldest is McEwan Miniatures with their STARWAR 2250 ships and rules.

The rules are one of the more extensive, being 44 pages long and containing both tactical and strategic rules as well as an outline on merging the game with McEwan's successful line of ground troops, STARGUARD. The strategic rules allow for exploration, variable planet types, indigenous populations, and the creation of outposts and colonies.

The tactical rules are well thought out, though parts come across somewhat murkier than one would like. There are status charts for each ship class (you need to make copies before playing). These form the basis for play. Ships move by vector, in three dimensions. Combat is by a varied array of weapons: lasers, torpedoes, Anti-Matter Projectors, and splinter head missiles (something of a tactical MIRV). Defensive system include screens and anti-torpedo rockets. All of the weapons differ from one another in significant ways, but their individual rules are not so complex as to make play tedious. Damage is figured in structure points which accumulate towards the final destruction of the craft. A large amount of special damage results knock out turrets, launchers and other individual systems.

The McEwan line of ships is intended specifically for these rules. It includes, at present, sixteen types of ships (not all of which are covered in the rules, implying an expansion kit. The models are in lead, and the designs are fairly traditional. The Federation (Earth) craft are all needle-nosed and delta winged. The hulls are streamlined and details, such as laser blisters and vision ports, are all that are present. This makes painting and preparation time fairly short. Another advantage of this line is their relative inexpensiveness: ships are priced from 50 cents to $1, most being 75 cents.

Superior Models also offers a coordinated set of rules/pieces, under the heading STARFLEET WARS. The rules come boxed, along with a destroyer

model from each of the five races in the game. This reviewer is not particularly fond of this packaging tactic since it ups the price of the rules package considerably, and essentially forces the buyer to purchase models he may not want. The rules are simple, fast and clean. Ships have offensive and defensive factors which they may power from their power quota. Firing is conducted by rolling percentage dice (provided) on a chart, matrixing speed and distance. Damage is taken only in terms of power units. The advanced rules add a little more variety. Special rules are included for fighters, both in intercept and attack roles, a close-in defense system against fighters, (actually just a percentage roll to destroy attacking fighters), boarding(?), an energy damping field, invisibility shields, and particle weapons. The latter pierces opposing shields and have the ability to inflict some rather inconsequential special damage.

The Superior line of starships includes ships of five races (Human, Avarian, Entomalian, Aquarian, Carnivoran) and each race has a representative Dreadnought, attack carrier, battlecruiser, cruiser, and destroyer as well as a fighter. The models have a lot of detail (bordering on the garish) and are bristling with turrets, sensor modules and a variety of other odds and ends whose purposes we can only guess at. My major criticism of the ship designs is, for some reason, the designer felt it neccessary that the ships in some way resemble the race that built them. Hence, Carnivoran ships have a cat-like appearance, and the Aquarians look like turtles. Only the Terran ships don't look this way, and they, well I'm surprised the Star Wars Corporation hasn't sued over the resemblence to their "Imperial Stardestroyer"! The ship pieces are fairly large and expensive, the large ships running upwards of $4.

Taken as a whole, the Superior line is something of a dissappointment. The ships are not, at least in my opinion very appealing. They are high priced, and the rules have a sort of thrown together feeling.

Valiant Miniatures offers one of the oldest (if not the oldest) lines of lead spaceships available. The ships are *very* detailed with fuel lines, weapons, and other equipment visible. In direct contrast to the McEwan ships, these are obviously not intended to land on surfaces, with their protruding guns and round command modules. Only the smaller craft appear capable of planet fall.

This line is divided into humans (the ubiquitous Federation again) and aliens. The alien ships are truly bizarre looking, though similar enough in general design to mesh with the Earth vessels. Various heavy ships are available (1 or 2 per package at $3.50): Heavy cruisers, battlecruisers, escorts and destroyers. Smaller craft (4-15 per package) include scouts, interceptors, assault ships, and three kinds of fighters. Valiant also has available fleet supply ships and hyperspace submarines (?). More ships are planned. One nice touch, these ships are made to fit on stands Valiant provides (in separate packages), and thus look much better on the gaming table.

No rules are specified for these ships. The designers offer a few suggestions in the instruction/brochure included in each package, and the gamer interested can check out any of the rules reviewed later in this article that are not intended for any particular miniatures line.

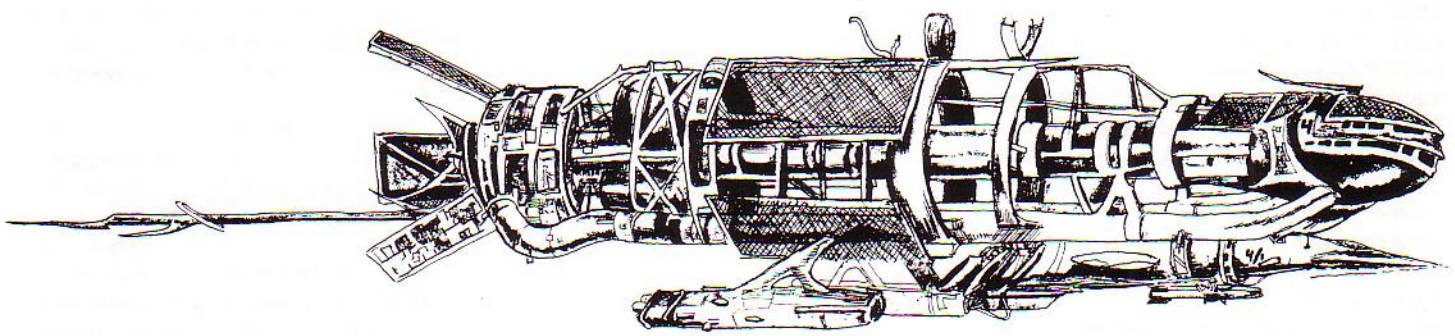
A similar case exists with the "Space Squadrons 2998" from Grenadier, the most recent of the space fleet lines to appear. The Grenadier castings come in blister packs for $3.50. Each pack contains one battleship or two cruisers (one heavy, one light) or eight fighters, for either the (you guessed it) Earth Federation or Alien Invasion Fleet. In addition there are three packs representing the Auxiliary Belt Fleet, two being cruiser types and the latter being fighters. A fourth group is the Tech-World fleet consisting entirely of support ships (minelayers, refuelers, etc). The Grenadier line is unique in that it is only one to feature a spacestation, "Battlestation Armageddon" is built by buying various kits (such as platforms or installations and accessories) and fitting them together as the gamer sees fit. Unfortunately, the result (if the photograph in the catalog is any indication), is a daddylonglegs with laser mounts.

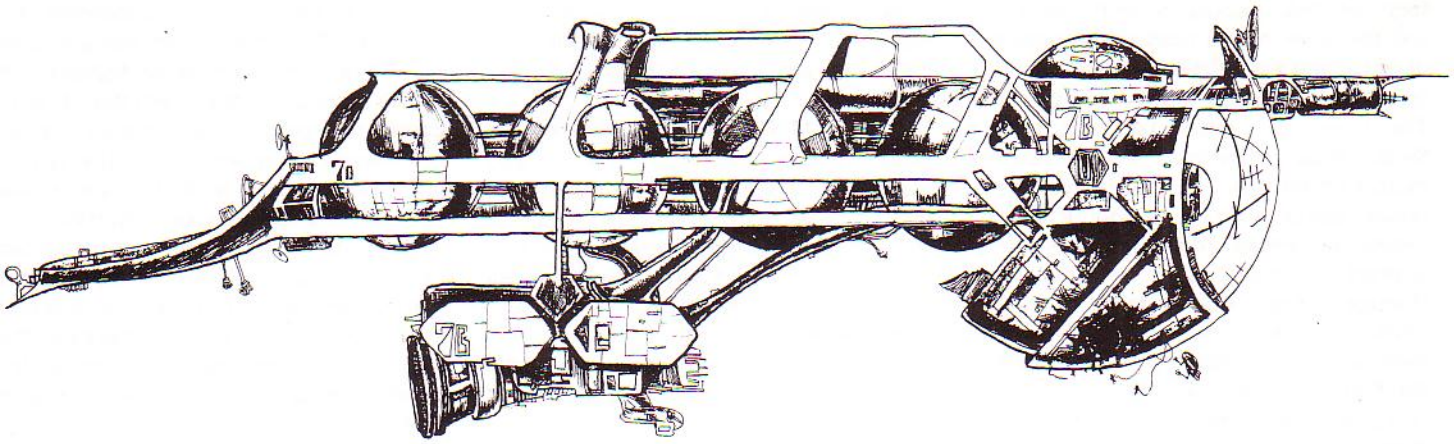
On the whole, the Grenadier line is a nice compromise between the simplicity and economical price of the McEwan line and the detail and expense of the Valiant. The castings are of high quality and nice detail. Some of the ships, such as the Aurora class Attack Cruiser are real beauties.

A final line to be reviewed is that offered by Minifigs. This is a rather scattered collection of ten ships spread over four races. The line has been out for a number of years and no additions have been made, so one can conjecture that Minifigs is not pushing the SF aspect much.

The nice thing about this group is the price. The catalog I have (about a year old) lists prices ranging from 25-60cents per ship, comparing very favorably to any of the lines listed above. The castings though, are small, and at least to my sense of esthetics, kind of weird looking. Minifigs also offers a fair range of infantry coordinating with the spaceship races, but the same brand of "originality" of design seems to extend to these as well.

If you are looking for a set of rules to go with those miniatures that don't have a coordinating rules volume, or are unhappy with those that do, the follow-





ing three are some of the best.

GALACTIC WAR by Tabletop games features some nice, introductory level rules that are easily adaptable to any model series. Ships have beginning levels of energy to be expended on movement, weapons and shield. The fuel level is finite though, and falls rapidly. A unique four-phase system (requiring written orders) allows for some second guessing. Because ships may not have screens up in the same phase as they fire, firing ships are not very vulnerable. Once torpedoes and lasers get through the screen there is a table to roll on to determine what is hit. Three classes of ships, with varying energy levels, and rear and forward firing laser guns and torpedo tubes are included. Some nice cardstock ships, printed in color are included.

A more sophisticated effort can be found in STAR COMMAND. These rules provide an outline for a strategic game and some interesting historical background and psuedo-scientific material, along with some good solid tactical rules. Four classes of ships are listed for both the Terrans and aliens, though they vary slightly for each side. Weapons include beams, lasers, and seeker missiles; defense is by screens. As in most rules, per turn energy to the various systems is the core of the system. One fairly clever idea is that the ships are allowed to carry a given *number* of weapons; type is left up to the player. The variety of weapons, each using a different CRT and a little adaptation would make these rules suitable for any model series the gamer might use.

A final rules booklet, STELLAR WARS, makes a massive attempt to be the rules for all model lines. Forsaking any particular "historical" or technical framework, these rules list a myriad of offensive, defensive, and propulsion systems all given values in the game and assigned a certain point cost for building. The broadbase of systems available would allow castings from any and all of the above model lines to fight side by side. Towards the end of the book is a compilation of ship pieces available by various manufacturers and a guide to intergrating them into a campaign. A good effort, but a little cluttered.

To a much greater degree than boardgaming, miniatures require time. A boardgame can be broken out, the rules read, and play started in a single afternoon. Miniatures are a totally different case. There is considerable preparation involved before play can even begin. Painting requires some skill, but more important is patience. Casting can be given a hurry-up-and-let's play paint job taking twenty minutes or so, or the gamer can opt for a showcase effort, with every line perfect and every detail taken care of. The gamer working with spaceships is more fortunate than those working with figures, since he can get away with less detail on the ships. Still each model must be cleaned, flash removed, primer applied, and finally, painted. Stands and other play aids might also need to be constructed.

Another major consideration is money. Unlike boardgames, which, for the most part, only require a one time outlay of $10-$15, building a decent size fleet for two opposing sides can be fairly expensive. With the vast majority of the model lines mentioned here, this could run upwards of $35-$50 for just moderate forces. Most miniatures players make a very large initial purchase and add on as funds allow. Another way to get around this is to play in groups, with certain players providing the ships for one side. Tools must also be taken into account, as the models can't be prepared without items such as X-acto blades, a good set of brushes, and of course, paint.

A final element is space. Miniatures require at least a 4' x 4' area---many rules will require more room unless you alter the distances used. You need to have plenty of room to maneuver, for a good game. Usually a good size table or tile floor will do.

These last few points are not meant to scare anyone away from miniatures, only to inform them of the large investment in time and money required. Indeed, acquiring and painting your models is often more fun than playing with them!

Miniatures can be an interesting asset to any SF gamer's array of boardgames. Playing times tend to be shorter than most boardgames and miniatures battles are much more colorful than those pushing cardboard counter around on a hexgrid. It is hoped that this brief survey has served to help those gamers interested in this facet of the hobby.

Getting More From BLACK HOLE

by

Glenn L. Williams

As a tactical game, BLACK HOLE covers its subject very well, but I have some nagging doubts about those ruins scattered about the sunside of Dunkin's asteroid. I propose the following additions to the game:

1) The first addition is simply a new unit, infantry in armored space suits. Infantry are a laser class combat unit, although their weapons are low power, and therefore of limited range. Their primary mission is that of classic foot sloggers, to go in and hold the territory. The infantry counter's factors are 1-3-1. All are identical. OLYMPICA'S counters serve very well since they are also blue and white, simply ignore their printed values. Infantry double their defensive value in any type of terrain other than clear (ruins, mountains and craters). They may never use jump movement. Their combat range is always one hex. Infantry may be carried by other units, and must land on Dunkin's asteroid in their carriers. The primary infantry carrier is the PSV, which may carry two units. The secondary carrier is the HEV, which may carry one unit. Infantry enter or leave their carriers at the beginning of the movement phase, and the carrier may move the turn they enter or leave it. Infantry occupying ruins count as HEVs for victory point purposes. To represent their higher value, they cost two, rather than one point.

2) The black hole distorts the gravitational field within the center of the torus, therefore, lasers, whose beam would be bent and absorbed, should be more limited than they are. To represent their inability to fire straight across the interior, assume the black hole creates a dark space blocking the opposite side of the donut's interior. To determine the dark space, count fifteen hexes along the same hex row as the laser combat unit. The dark space is from the thirteenth to the seventeenth hex along that row. In other words, the dark space for a laser combat unit inside the torus is a five hex band halfway around the inside. Laser fire into that band is blocked for that unit. Note that every laser unit on the inside has its own separate dark space.

3) The last suggestions directly relate to the game's objective, the ruins. Whenever a player first occupies any ruin, he must roll for random events to see if he has awakened any alien devices. The roll is two six-sided die, whose result is compared to the random events table.

RANDOM EVENTS TABLE

Roll	*Event*
2	Black hole opens
3	Friendly missile
4	Friendly laser
5	Neutral laser
6	Normal victory points
7	Normal victory points
8	Normal victory points
9	Neutral missile
10	Hostile laser
11	Hostile missile
12	Black hole opens

Explanation of random events:

Black hole opens. The black hole in the center of the asteroid is actually a gate for inter-stellar alien ships (as in Adrian Berry's THE IRON SUN). Alien ships are assumed to be in jump for the duration of the game and are equipped with both lasers and a TMU missile launch capacity. Their attack is determined randomly against any units on the interior surface of the asteroid or in jump. Laser capacity is 6, and their defense strength is two. One alien ship will appear in each subsequent landing phase of the player who triggered this response.

Friendly missile. The ruin contains a DMU launcher (defense strength two) which the triggering player has at his disposal throughout the remainder of the game. It is a fixed installation. Alien missiles never detonate when they strike mountains, they simply pass through them. They will however, detonate when passing through any friendly unit other than one occupying their own ruin.

Friendly laser. As with a friendly missile, except the fixed installation is a four point laser, defense strength two. Alien lasers do not have the dark space limitation.

Neutral laser. A four attack point, two defense strength laser, which will attack the nearest human unit in every laser combat phase.

Normal victory points. No odd or unusual results. Only on a roll of 5, 6 or 7 does a player receive victory points for occupying the ruin in question.

Neutral missile. Like a neutral laser in that it attacks any human unit, although always the nearest. It is a DMU with a defense strength of two. Its missiles do not detonate when passing through mountains.

Hostile laser. Like a friendly laser, except that it becomes a unit for the player's opponent.

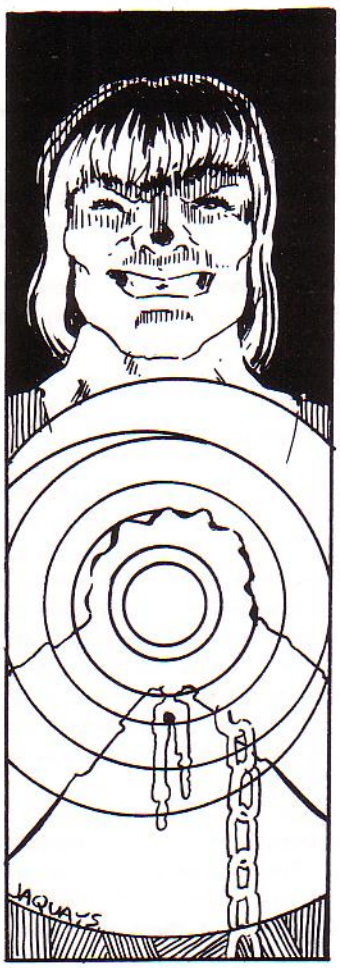
Hostile missile. A fixed installation DMU, defense strength two, available to the player's opponent.

Note that for each player there are three possible random events rolls, one for each ruin. It is possible to have one ruin fighting for and another against him. Enemy units destroyed by alien units working for the player do count for victory points for either player. It is permissible to attack an alien installation, destroy the active combat unit, occupy the ruin, roll and have a favorable result.

I hope that these suggestions add to your enjoyment of a fine, though weird, game. The random events table is merely one interpretation of the nature of the ruins. I viewed them somewhat like a spider's web. An enterprising player could easily dream of extraordinary adventures to be found in trying to take the asteroid and its artifacts.

THE DERYNI

by
Ronald Pehr



Katherine Kurtz has written a series of stories about a world resembling England in the Middle Ages. There is high chivalry, the power of the Church, and the politics of feudalism. There is also the Deryni. These are a mutant off-shoot of humanity, possessing psychic talents. Few in number, they are viewed by the general populace as evil practioners of black magic and withchcraft. Much of the plot in Ms. Kurtz' stories deals with the friction between humanity and the Deryni.

Deryni are human in appearance, tending toward slimness of build. The psychic talents are genetically dominant, so that the rare marriages of humankind and Deryni produce Deryni offspring. Deryni fit admirably into a fantasy game conducted under MELEE/WIZARD rules.

Deryni characters should start with ST 6, DX 10, IO 8, plus 8 extra points, as Elves, but without the extra MA of Elves. Unlike regular wizard-types, Deryni are not hampered by the need to learn a discipline foreign to mortal beings. Training brings out their powers more fully, but it is development of a natural talent rather than an attempt to alter natural laws by concentration of thought, as human magic. Any Deryni met in a game can be presumed to have had any training necessary as a child, again in contrast to human Wizards who certainly could not begin to learn the study of sorcery until well into their teens. It is the difference between learning to walk and learning to fly a plane.

Thus, a Deryni can function as a warrior, without the -4DX penalty for use of a weapon that is incurred by wizards. In physical combat, Deryni warriors are subject to the same DX modification for their armor and ST limitations on their weapons as any other MELEE warrior. The psychic powers manifest themselves in a MELEE/WIZARD game as magic spells. Such "spells" are rolled against DX *unadjusted* for armor, and they are available regardless of IQ. All Deryni can cast the following spells, the same way as other spells are cast in WIZARD, *without* loss of ST:

Drop weapon
Fire in 1 hex
Image of 1 hex
Destroy Creation
Mage Sight

The following spells are also available, regardless of IQ, but *do* use ST points:

Spell Shield
Death
Any Illusion
Destroy Illusion

Images greater than 1 hex can be cast with 1/2 usual ST cost. Restoration of ST - This only works on another figure, supplying ST on a 1 for 1 basis. Unlike an Aid Spell, the restoration is permanent, but cannot be used to bring a figure above the ST it started with.

Four Deryni, acting in concert, can erect a one-megahex Circle of Protection (Treat as Missile-Type Spell for distance, only one of the four must make the DX roll). The Circle is impervious to movement, missiles, weapons, or spells. It costs no ST to erect or maintain but the four can take no other action while concentrating. The Circle is used as a defense, or as a mini-arena where formal duels between Deryni are fought.

Obviously, matching ordinary warriors against Deryni warriors in fair fight is unfeasible for the humans. Deryni can be attached to an expedition of standard warriors on a 5%, 10%, or 20% basis, depending on what the opposition has in store. The fantasy world you make up might have true human wizards as a rarity, with extra-normal powers usually available only to those predisposed by birth, such as Deryni, and perhaps Elves. Deryni can be matched against each other in duels, or against human Wizards. Even a Deryni wizard is possible, having the attributes of a Deryni plus the spells per IQ of a wizard, if set against foes of awesome power (Gargoyle Wizards, a contingent of Motie Warriors, technological foes). In contrast, there could be Deryni without warrior training, who must rely solely on their powers and perhaps a knife, against armed, armored or magical foes.

News & Plugs

GAMING CONVENTIONS:

MON CON III: (March 30 to April 1) Conference Center, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV. A combination SF and wargaming con, which will feature guests Joe Haldeman and Marc Miller. Info: Mon Con III, Conference Center, WV University, Morgantown, WV 26506.

CANGAMES '79: (May 20-22) University of Ottawa. GoH: Gary Gygax. Info: Cangames '79, 201-360 Dundas St., Vanier, Ontario, Canada, K1L 7W7.

GLASCON IV: Greater Los Angeles Simulations Convention (June 15, 16, 17) $3 pre-reg; $5 at the door at CSU, Northridge. For further information write: CSUN-SGA 7133 Reseda Blvd., Reseda, CA 91335. Dealers invited.

THINGS THAT CAME IN THE MAIL:

SIGNAL no.141: Signal is the newszine of the gaming field. No.141 is the holiday edition and has an excellent cover by Phil Foglio. Regular features include a con list, new products, magazine reviews, and an assortment of various gaming news. Subs: 5/$1, Signal, 46 Carleton St., Oromocto, N.B., Canada, E2V 2C8. Sent cash or make checks payable to John Mansfield.

Moravian Dynasty: M.D.'s 2nd anniversary issue contained a detailed review of Unentschieden, an article on Stellar Conquest, plus other articles and reviews including an essay on grilled cheese sandwiches. MD features include a balance of Diplomacy, SF and fantasy games along with the usual wargames. Subs: 12/$3.50 or 3/$1 on a trial basis. Make checks payable to Robert Goldman, 200 Old Army Rd., Scarsdale, NY 10583.

OUTPOSTS: Issue no.12 has articles on Desert Fox, Panzerblitz, Tobruk, Battle for France, and an index to the General volumes 7-6 to 15-2. Outposts also includes a wide variety of features: game reviews, contests, gaming news, and even a gaming crossword puzzle. Subs: 4/$6, 1/$1.75, make checks payable to Conflict Simulation Society, 2 Desmond Run, Sickleville, NJ 08081.

APPLE LANE and **CREATURES OF CHAOS 1** have been released by Chaosium. Both are additions to RUNEQUEST, another Chaosium game. Prices are $4 for Apple Lane, and $2 for Creatures of Chaos 1. They are available from The Chaosium, P.O. Box 6302, Albany, NY 94706.

THE DRAGONLORDS is a new release from Fantasy Games Unlimited. It is a two player boardgame. Components include a 21 page rules book, 23"x28" map, 266 die-cut counters, and eight supplementary sheets. THE DRAGONLORDS comes in a zip-lock bag . It is available from Fantasy Games Unlimited, P.O. Box 182, Roslyn, NY 11576.

WARGAMER's INFORMATION: WI is a newszine published by Flying Buffalo. Much of the news concerns Flying Buffalo Products, but WI has announcements of club meetings, new products and con reports. Subs: 12/$2.50, Flying Buffalo Inc., PO Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252.

Hex-O-Gram is a catalogue published by Lou Zocchi of GameScience. If you don't have access to a well stocked hobby store, Hex-O-Gram provides an excellent service. For a free copy write Lou Zocchi, 7604 Newton Drive, Biloxi, MS 39532.

NEBULA AWARD NOMINATIONS: The 1978 Nebula Awards nominations were released on January 24, 1979. They include the following novels:

DREAMSNAKE– Vonda McIntyre
STRANGERS– Gardner Dozois
THE FADED SUN: KESRITH– C.J. Cherryh
KALKI– Gore Vidal
BLIND VOICES– Tom Reamy

DUNE FANS REJOICE! -Frank Herbert's DUNE has been sold to Dino deLaurentis for a record $1,000,000. Herbert will also do the screenplay for the movie. He will get extra money for the script, and more money in the form of a percentage of the film's gross profit. Herbert was in the process of writing DUNE IV when the deal came through. He will start work on the movie immediately, shelving the new book for awhile.

SF CONVENTIONS:

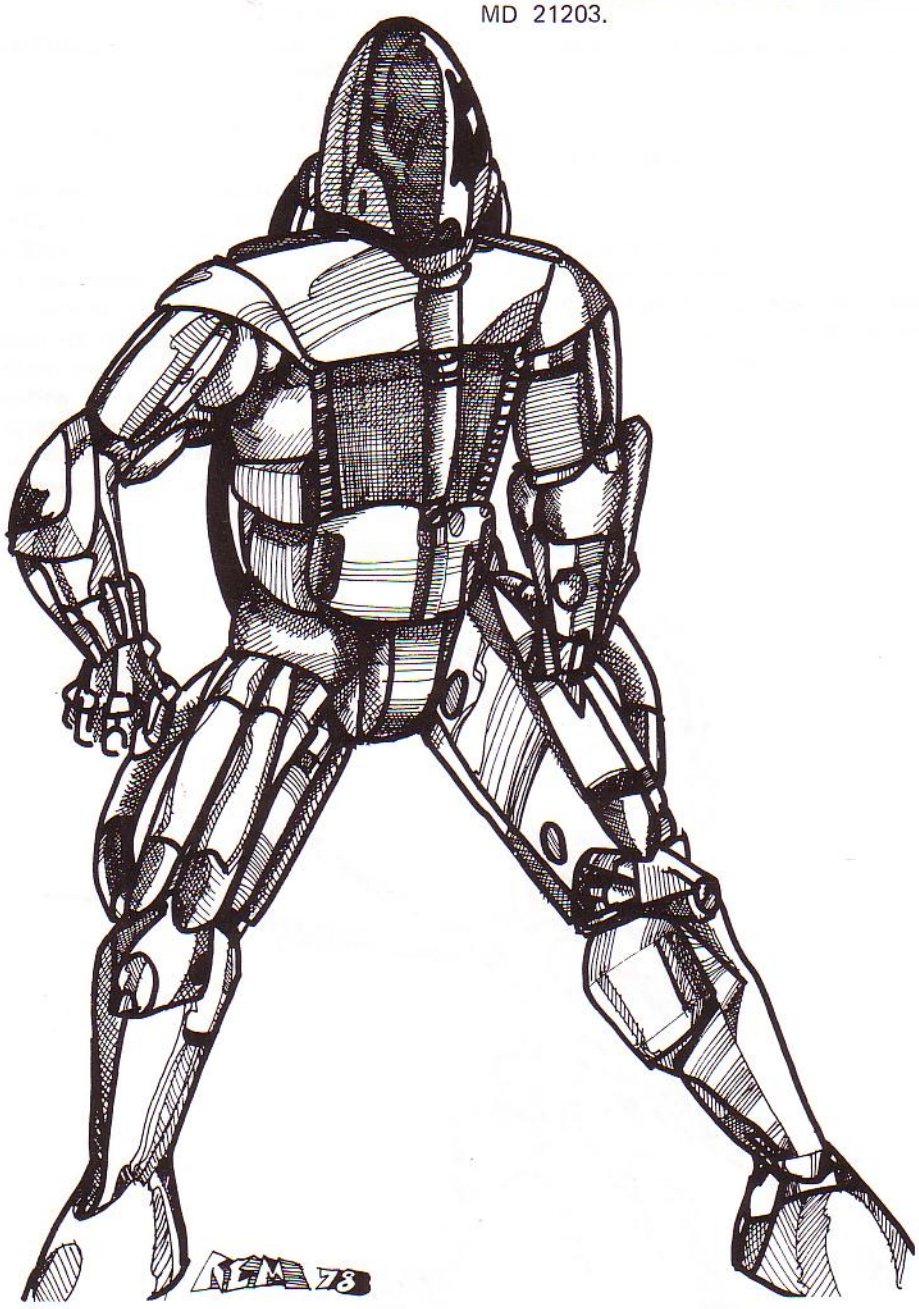
AGGIECON X: (March 29- April 1) Texas A&M campus, College Station, TX. GoH: Theodore Sturgeon, Guest Artist: Boris. Mem: $5 till March 16, $6 after. The best SF con in Texas, fine facilities, good con staff, and lots of quality films. Info: AggieCon X, Memorial Student Center, Box 5718, College Station, TX 77844.

LUNACON '79: (March 29- April 1) Sheraton Inn at LaGuardia, New York City. GoH: Ron Goulart. Mem: $7.50 to March 15, $9.50 after. Info: Luna-Con '79, c/o Walter Cole, 1171 East 8th St., Brooklyn, NY 11230.

URCON I: (March 31, 11am-1am) GoH: Roger Zelazny. The University of Rochester Science Fiction Society is sponsoring this one day con. Listed events include gaming, masquerade, and art show. Membership is $4 until March 15, and $5 at the door. For more info: URCON I, Box 5036 River Station, Rochester, NY 14627.

AMBERCON: (April 6-8) Wichita Royale, Wichita, KS. GoHs: Roger Zelazny, Richard Delap, Wilson Tucker. Mem: $5. Info: Gordon Garb, 505 N. Rock Rd. no. 909, Wichita KS 67206.

BALTICON 13: (April 13-15) Hunt Valley Inn, Baltimore, MD. Mem: $5 in advance, $7 at the door. Info: Baltimore SF Society, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203.



PENULTICON: (May 25-28) Cosmopolitan Hotel, Denver, CO. GoHs: C.J. Cherryh, Samuel Delany, Ed Bryant. Mem: $10. Info: Penulticon, Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211.

JUST IMAGICON: (May 25-27) Holiday Inn Rivermont, Memphis, Tennessee. GoHs: L. Sprague de Camp, Kelly Freas. Mem: $10 till April 1, $15 after. Info: Louis Armor, 4475 Martha Cole, Memphis, Tenn. 38118.

BYOB—CON 9: (May 25-27) Heritage Inn, Kansas City, MO. GoHs: Karl Edward Wagner, Andrew Offutt. Mem: $8 till May 1, $10 after. Info: Byob-Con 9, c/o 3720 Jefferson, Kansas City, MO 64111.

MIDWESTCON 79: (June 22-24) Info: Lou Tabakow, 3953 St. Johns Terrace, Cincinnati, OH 45236.

WESTERCON 32: (July 4-8) Sheraton Palace, San Francisco, CA. Mem: $7.50, GoHs: Richard Lupoff, Bruce Pelz, Marta Randall. Info: Westercon 32, 4682 18th St., San Francisco, CA 94114.

CONEBULUS III: (July 20-22) Thruway Hilton Inn, Syracuse, NY. Mem: $6 till 7/1 $10 after. Info: Carol Gobeyn, 619 Stolp Ave., Syracuse, NY 13207.

DEEPSOUTHCON: (July 20-22) La Pavillon Hotel, New Orleans. GoH: R.A. Lafferty. Mem: $7.50, $10 at the door. Info: Sons of the Sand, Ltd., 1903 Dante St., New Orleans, LA 70118.

MOSCON I: (September 29- October 1) University Best Western Inn, Moscow, Idaho. GoH: Verna Smith ("Doc" Smith's Daughter) Distinguished Guest: Robert Heinlein-health permitting. Membership is $6 until September 1, $8 after then. More info: Moscon I, P.O. Box 9141, Moscow, Idaho 83843.

NOREASCON TWO: 38th World Science Fiction, "WorldCon" (August 29-September 1, 1980) Sheraton-Boston Hotel. GoHs: Damon Knight & Kate Wilhelm. This is the BIGGY. Memberships are $8 supporting, $15 attending in the first half of 1979. Info requests from NOREASCON II, P.O. Box 46, MIT Branch P.O., Cambridge, MA 02139.

LORDS of the MIDDLE SEA

a review

by

W. G. Armintrout

History buffs will always remember fondly one lunatic who used to live in San Francisco. This man believed he was the Emperor and true ruler of that city. He lived in a great old mansion overlooking the Bay and called himself Emperor Norton. He is commemorated by the tourist boats there which are named after him.

LORDS OF THE MIDDLE SEA is a lot like Emperor Norton-- it doesn't seem to quite know what it really is. It seems to think it is a most magnificent thing-- a strategic wargame with tactical richness and role-playing! Honest!

This game has wonderful parents. Where did they go wrong? The father is Lynn Willis, the wise old sage who conjured up Metagaming's GODSFIRE and OLYMPICA. The proud mother is The CHAOSium, the "relatively new and infant game company" (it says that right in their literature) which gave birth to the immortal WHITE BEAR AND RED MOON.

So meet LORDS OF THE MIDDLE SEA, the game of North America reborn in 2401 A.D. Some mild cataclysms have struck our home continent: the Great Plains have fallen into the ocean, volcanoes have added some mountains, the sea has risen thirty feet to wash away many of our favorite metropolises, and the world was demolished by a nuclear war.

The components are of fair quality. The map is 22" x 34" and seems sturdy. All 252 counters are provided, though some people will find the soft pastel colors hard to distinguish after a few hours of play. The rulebook calls for two sets of play-aids, but the CHAOSium has combined them by printing on each other's flipside. Since it is impossible to read the Terrain Effects Table when the Battalia side is covered with reinforcement counters, the company has kindly provided a surplus Terrain Effects Table to pass around. The advertisements call the 12-page rulebook "large", which must be because all of the printing is done in little type.

As I mentioned earlier, this game has delusions of grandeur. Official advertisements proclaim it ". . .A STRATEGIC GAME. . ." with ". . .TACTICAL RICHNESS. . .". I personally am at a loss to find any tactical richness when moving counters representing fleets (10-15 ships), air support (5-7 dirigibles), and large land forces (600-3000 men). Ignore the rulebook's pictures of the dramatic duel between a missile-firing wooden frigate and two dirigibles, one of which is going down in flames. This is a game of masses, not of tactical units.

The Basic Game is, nevertheless, good. Six pages of rules explain how to fight and move and you're ready to play. Three scenarios are given, allowing from 2-4 players. The four nations are TRANSWYOMING (present-day Washington, Idaho and Montana), MEXICO (based in the industrial capital of the world. . . . .Utah), NAHUA (where Mexico used to be before it migrated), and THE WARDOMS (the islands of New England, across the Nebraska Sea). Each nation has its personal advantage. Transwyoming has more of the cavalry-like hordes. The Wardoms have more naval forces. Nahua, because of its numerous cities, raises more of the city infantry known as gangs (farm boys are called levies). Mexico has the technological advantage and starts with the dirigibles.

Turns represent three months. Military options include amphibious and aerial assaults, interceptions by defending forces of attacking units, and a comfortable stacking rule limiting unit concentration according to the type of terrain. Reinforcements can be raised on any city, farm, and at remote points in the jungle where the hordes roam. Some nice optional rules allow enemies to destroy the dikes of New England (flooding the countryside), and introduce antiquated artillery which is so unreliable that its combat factors are determined by die roll before every combat.

The Basic Game is a good, above average wargame. It is fun to play and worth replaying. The "tactical richness" is a lot of malarky (kind word) but it's still a nice game.

On to the Advanced Game, which takes up six more pages of rules! The advertisement sums it well: ". . .THE ADVANCED GAME ADDS ECONOMICS, DIPLOMACY, CAMPAIGNS, SUNKEN CITY MINING, QUESTS, LIBRARIES AND MORE."

Now, there *are* some good moments here. A simple economics section allows players to save and spend from treasuries to get reinforcements instead of accepting the automatic allotments of the Basic Game. Diplomacy rules add a new counter, the emissary, which travels to neutral lands to recruit mercenaries and rent wooden floating cities known as arks. The supply rule gives a purpose to the supply wagon counters, but it needs some work. From here on the Advanced Game is strictly downhill.

Ruler markers are allowed to go on quests and accumulate "banner points". A ruler with enough points becomes a Hero-king and selects a secret power from a table. Powers range from being able to lead armies over impassable mountains

to a special ability to rearrange player order twice per game. Quests give more banner points than anything else but are terribly dull, like circumnavigating a continent or touring the homeland. After each Quest a ruler gets to roll a die to see if he discovered a library, which can do things like eliminate winter movement restrictions or double transport fleet capacity. A Hero-king who discovers a library is known as a Sorceror-king.

None of this goes over too great with me, but then something tastes sour in my mouth when I find I'm supposed to be sending my ruler off on quests to become a Hero-king while I am also trying to fight a stategic war. After all, in Avalon Hill's THIRD REICH nobody makes Hitler get on a boat and sail around Europe. . .

The sunken city mining is only a minor loathsome point, where players anchor arks over sunken cities and roll die to see if they've discovered any treasure.

What can be said about LORDS OF THE MIDDLE SEA? This is a game which tries too hard. It has no tactical richness, despite the pretty pictures in the rulebook. The role-playing is trivial and gets in the way. Like Emperor Norton, this game thinks it is a little bit of everything. . .and ends up being a little bit crazy.

But don't throw this game away! Just ignore the unfortunate parts of it and play the decent parts of it. After all, even Emperor Norton was entertaining in his way-- and so is LORDS OF THE MIDDLE SEA.

LORDS OF THE MIDDLE SEA is available from The CHAOSium, P.O. Box 6302, Albany CA 94706 for $9.95.

MIND WAR

a review

by

Michael Striley

MIND WAR is a game of mental battle between para-psionic warriors in a hypothetical future Earth. In MIND WAR, damaging waves of solar radiation have resulted in a high incidence of significant genetic changes. This includes the introduction of varying degrees of para-psionic ability in roughly ten percent of the population. In the game, characters with para-psionic abilities battle in a universe where time and space, as we think of them, are meaningless. Each combatant envisions *an identical field of adjoining circles represented by the map as a common reference for mind to mind interactions between themselves (from the rules).* Battles, according to the three page rationale, are rarely lethal. Instead, they are aimed at merely forcing the opponent from the mental grid. It is the purpose of this article to describe this game as objectively as possible, to point out some of its strengths and weaknesses, and to suggest some modifications which, in my opinion, make this otherwise mediocre game challenging and enjoyable.

Game components include an aesthetically appealing 10"x17" two-color, heavy paper map (mental grid), charts, tables, forty die-cut counters, an illustrated, twelve-page booklet of rationale, basic & optional rules, and scenarios.

In most of the included scenarios, each player controls one para-psionic combatant of para-psi class one, two, or three. These classes are defined by their different ranges of para-psionic abilities, and are expressed in terms of para-psionic points available per turn (anywhere between five and twenty-two). These points are used interchangably to move and create mental beams and shields. Play continues (in all scenarios) until only one player remains in the mental grid.

Each game turn is composed of four phases. These are, in order, the plot phase, the movement phase, the reserve allocation phase, and the combat resolution phase. During the plot phase, both players simultaneously plot the expenditures of their para-psi points for that turn. These points can be allocated to the movement of the character between circles and to the creation of mental beams and shields of varying intensities. Also, a limited number of points (0-2) can be held in reserve, to be allocated to plotted beams and shields after the simultaneous movement phase. Combat, which occurs when a beam is plotted to hit a circle in which their is an opposing combatant, is resolved by cross indexing *net* beam intensity (determined by the intensity of the beam targeted for that circle minus the intensity of the shield guarding that direction), with a die roll on the CRT. The numerical result is the number of *class levels* lost by the defender. For example, a level three psionic who is forced to reduce his class by two levels would change from a para-psi point allowance per turn of between seventeen and twenty-two (class three range) to somewhere within the level one range of five to ten points per turn.

This combat system leads to massive changes in relative strength from turn to turn. In fact, I've found the first player to score a hit on his opponent (no easy task) usually wins the game. The opponent will have lost so many para-psi points due to his class change that he can no longer compete effectively. Unfortunately, scoring a hit is not as dependent on strategy and tactics, as it is on the luck-of-the-die and simply out-guessing one's opponent, as players leap-frog back and forth, firing more or less randomly. The result of all this is a game that is often frustrating, and that awards wins and losses by criteria basically unrelated to relative gaming skill.

To remedy these problems, I would suggest the following minor modifications: First, the results on the CRT be in terms of lost para-psi *points* per turn instead of para-psi *levels.* Although this would increase playing time, it would make shifts in relative power less massive, thus giving a player who sustains an early loss a chance to win. Second, scenarios should give each player *several* characters instead of one. This would allow players to carry out strategies such as encirclement, isolation of opponents and the creation of fields of fire. I do not mean to imply MIND WAR, in its market form, has no positive aspects. It does. MIND WAR is simple to learn, fast moving, and can generally be played in less than an hour, much like Metagaming's MicroGames. But, in my opinion, and in the opinions of those with whom I've played the game, unless modifications (such as those that I've suggested) are introduced, the game's weaknesses outweigh it's strengths.

MIND WAR is part of the Green Planet Trilogy of Games, and can be joined with them. It is available from Fact and Fantasy Games, P.O. Box 1472, Maryland Heights, MO 64043, for $3.50.

THE REALM OF YOLMI

A REVIEW

by

Dana Holm

Outside of the few nice touches that any new game will have, my impression is that this game is a deliberate spoof on DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. A few changes, easily seen through, and one is right back to D&D. Oh, sure, it uses 8-sided dice to generate characters instead of 6-sided ones. And Rupniks, Chromniks, and Galiks for gold, silver, and copper (although it says in parentheses that those are the equivalents). Then there are the three basic classes of adventurers - called Soldier, Fly-Catcher, and Scientist - get 8-sided, 6-sided, and 4-sided hit dice respectively. The negative armor class system is used, with the lower numbers being better. The character gains experience points by killing monsters and bringing home treasure. All for the purpose of changing levels.

Player characteristics are the basic six used by D&D, with intelligence called Wit and charisma called Personality. There are additions to hit probability with increasing strength. They are given in percentages instead of in terms of 20-sided dice, although the chances are always increased in five percent increments. Damage adds, encumberances, and door opening chances are listed in neat rows with a percent roll for exceptional ability when the maximum strength is rolled. Like D&D, even to the numbers in parentheses for opening of "phase-locked" doors. Constitution influences add to hit dice as personality influences hireling's morale.

Each class has an elite group. Soldiers can be Cyborgs, like Steve Austin. Scientists have their Robot-makers, whose robots have specs somewhat like the various Golems of D&D. Fly-Catchers have Psychics, with psychic powers very much like spells.

The setting gives a background against which actions take place, something which D&D doesn't do, though other role-playing games do. A cloud of space gas descended on Earth killing 95 percent of all humans. Animals that survived are changed into "fierce and mutated beings that traveled in destructive packs". A newscaster becomes immortal through the use of drugs and becomes the Yolmi, after whom the game is named.

The Yolmi leads a religious group of other undead things. Flies make up one large group of the surviving animals and were so much of a threat that humans have the Fly-Catchers to deal with them. Other "monsters" are the automations, which of course were not affected by the gas cloud, and are now out of control; regular mutated animals of all shapes and sizes; and other men not under player control. Agents (men who wear overcoats and low hats, forever followed by fog, who speak in hushed tones and endeavor to sell secrets), bandits, panhandlers, Mafioso, gamblers, and politicians are some of the men one could meet. These are only the land monsters. There are also those for sea and air adventures.

Supplies are those things that one would find laying around after the death of mankind, plus those simple things that would re-evolve. Firearms still exist- rifles, pistols, and Saturday Night Specials. Other weapons include: slings, chains, nun-chuks, and boom-a-rangs (called snapir). There are ropes, 15 foot poles, helmets, piano wire, sacks, torches, and 10' x 10' flypaper. For armor, there are: padded suits, bulletproof vests, and mecho-suits.

Then there are the exotic devices found in the treasure hoards of the monsters. Submachineguns, hand grenades, flame throwers, micro-lasers, and phasers for the offense. Padded suits minus three, which is three armor classes better than regular padded suits; mecho-suits minus five; force shields; and implosion cubes are there to be used on defense. Miscellaneous technological devices like: visicons, phase bags, anti-grav boots, detectors for about everything, and jet skis are found in some treasures. Drugs, plastic explosive, and even T.L.C. (time line convertors) are other possible finds. Again, these are only the treasures that one gets when fighting the land monsters. There are additional charts, all nice and neat, for sea and air treasures.

A referee is needed to lay out the different adventures a party may go on. He uses hex paper for outdoors and graph paper for underground. There are the creature encounter tables, rows and rows of things to meet, determined by a die roll, in this section. In other words, all the things that a D&D ref is responsible for.

AND, for those who become rich and powerful, one can go to his friendly neighborhood trading post. For a paltry two million Rupniks, the trader will set up a radar unit and teleporter and send you up to one of the orbiting spaceships. Abandoned by the crew when the gas cloud struck, the ships lie dormant. You can transport a party of only twenty and those better include many 15 level and above characters, because you have to activate the systems of the ship before you can go anywhere. At least one 15 level Psychic is needed, for he drives or jumps the ship from one spot to another outside the solar system, one light year per jump, twice per day. He must take drugs to stay fit.

In all there are 16 pages of ship particulars. Weapons, shields, combat, outer space monsters, and alien ships are covered. In my view, this is the best section of the 114 page book. By itself though, it may not be worth the $8.

THE REALM OF YOLMI is available from: West Coast Games, 1987 Santa Maria Way, Sacramento, CA 95825. I don't mind a good spoof, but I would like to know ahead of time that I am buying one. With this review, you out there will have a chance to make that choice.

Kick, Step, Pivot, Step, Walk, Walk, STOMP!

a review

by

Phil Kosnett

There are nights---especially at college--when you've ravaged every box of cookies in sight, played hell with your body chemistry, and brought your brain down to five percent of operation's capacity. Nights like that, MicroGames seem too intellectually exhuasting to play. Chaosium has just produced the game to play on nights when counting the dots on a die gives you a headache.

STOMP simulates the battle between a vapid giant named Thunderpumper and eighteen melon-munching elves who have invaded the garden of Thunderpumper's employer. Thunderpumper stumbles about stomping elves and bashing at them with his club, while the elves, in classic Lilliputian style, try to pin his sandals with spears and bring him to ground with lassoes. If the elves bring him down before 15 of them are pulped, he crashes into the garden wall, creating a gap for escape. . .the little guys win. The map is 14X16 hexes, with varied terrain. The giant player has two double-sized counters to represent Thunderpumper's feet, and a club counter. The elf player has elves of varying movement ability and two lassoes.

The game is quite simple. If part of Thunderpumper's foot ends its movement on an elf, it's mashed. The club is swung in a straight line through several hexes, knocking a target elf an equal number of hexes. If it hits a tree or the wall, no more elf; otherwise it's stunned. Thunderpumper's feet move independently, but in certain configurations (like walking pigeontoed), he trips and goes down. Thunderpumper cannot swing his club through his own body. After a few minutes, it becomes easy to visualize the giant towering over the map and you can understand the intent of the giant configuration rules.

Elves are fast enough to stay out of the way, but it's a small garden, there's no time limit, and they can't hide forever. So eventually, they must fight. Elves charge out of the woods or other hiding places to attack Thunderpumper's sandals. This is accomplished by a mystical diceless combat results system. "Opponents face one another. Each player holds out his left palm and twice pounds his right fist into his palm. On the third pound, players put into their palms X number of fingers. Matched fingers indicate that the elf succeeds. . ." The more elves attack a sandal, the more chance the sandal will be stuck. The giant can pivot on a stuck heel or toe portion, and can free one portion of foot per turn, but a concerted elf attack can quickly immobilize Thunderpumper. A little rope action and he's down (assuming good die rolls--uh, finger matches). But while all the elves are out in the open playing with his feet, Thunderpumper is bashing away with his club. It's a short game, 40 minutes at most.

I rather like this game. It's imaginative; it's fast and fun and balanced. The rules are a bit sketchy for a recruit customer to get everything right without being confused, but gamers with any experience at all will have no problem. The components make OGRE look like WAR IN EUROPE--twenty-four one-color regular-size thinboard counters, eight double-size foot counters (showing various permutations of free and stuck foot-portions), and one 8½"X13" one-sided, four-color sheet with front and back covers, mapsheet, and maybe 3000 words of rules, all in a small ziplock bag, all for the sum of $2.95. It's not a great leap forward in game design, but designer Tadashi Ehara and rules writer/illustrator Lynn "Olympica" Willis have produced a diversion that should be good for breaking in your non-gamer buddies and roomies--especially if you catch them on the right night. Published by Chaosium, Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706.

JUGGERNAUT ONE

by

Robert Chester

"Ah. . . Juggernaut, I still have a red light on the transfer panel."

"Roger, control."

"Juggernaut, its on the prime circuit pilot."

"Roger, control."

"Goddammit, Wayne. Make the switch -over! Wayne?. . . Are you listening Wayne?. . . Wayne? Wayne, we've been over it, and over it, and over it. You have to make the switch-over. Juggernaut is ready, Wayne, you have to let him free."

"It's not a *him*, George, it's a . . ."

"It's a cybernetic system, Wayne; it's not just a goddam machine."

"Wayne?. . . Wayne? Let's put it this way, Wayne, if you don't make the switch-over, you're. . . Well, hell, you'll never work for this government again!"

"Wayne?"

"Juggernaut One, Juggernaut One, this is Mission Control Central. We have a green board. Repeat, all boards showing green. Juggernaut One is operational."

"Sorry, George."

"I know, Wayne."

The tremendous bulk of Juggernaut One slid forward like an apartment building breaking loose. Deep in her bowels, below the feet of armor plate, below the weapons systems, past ammunition storage bins, the fuel tanks, and maintenance servos; deeper yet past the electronics, and the meager (and not altogether necessary) crew compartment, Juggernaut's fusion reactor blasted horsepower away from tortured atoms. Humble water sizzled into steam and roared over polished turbines. Massive converters screamed as if in pain, torqued axle shafts, and geared forward the tracks.

All was placid on the surface. White paint glinted under the garage lights. A radar array slowly orbited the central turret.

A seemingly insignificant creature stood next to it, waving the vehicle forward with fluorescent rods. The system towered ten times the creature's height, and cubed itself off in length and width.

Juggernaut One left behind a cosmoline stain on the tarmac, and in a spray of thin oil, whirred forward.

Juggernaut One, the single most destructive unit ever created, was free and unfettered by puny human control. Instincts of loyalty and gratitude, honor and courage, stayed its offensiveness; balanced its aggression. Since birth seconds ago, it loved its masters; its creators. Since birth, it hated its enemies -- it rolled forward!

Controlled power! Juggernaut was raw, awesome -- a machine designed for destruction. Its missiles could devastate cities; its guns could chew through any vehicle. Its defenses could buzz bullets like a nest of angry hornets, or choke attackers with a deadly fog. Together in one unit -- a system, it was the key to a world's conquest, and a destroyer of continents!

Juggernaut One rolled forward aggressively. The garage doors creaked and rattled as the technicians pushed them open. Juggernaut, eager, willing, like a child unaware of its muscles, barged ahead. The edge of the bay door caught in Juggernaut's side skirting. The white surface barely scratched, but the garage door buckled and tore. It was ripped, thrown and clattered to junk.

Juggernaut accelerated.

"God help us," whispered Wayne.

Mrs. Magillicuty noticed the beetle as it scurried out from under the sideboard. She stepped forward and placed the flat of her penny loafer on top of it. It crunched satisfyingly as she stepped down.

Mrs. Magillicuty went to the cupboard under the sink. She picked up a small wisk broom and swept the remains under the stove.

"Nasty little white bugger," she muttered.

ENTERTAINMENT

by Warren E. McGill

The other day I wandered by
A place where Ogres go to die,
A store not open there before,
But one that seemed to thrive on war.

I had meant to hurry by
But something there had caught my eye,
An ugly monster now I saw
Looked just like my mother-in-law.

So through the door my footsteps led,
With a heart chocked full of icey dread;
But curious why they advertised
A beast who should be atomized.

A voice boomed out "Just look around
But please try not to make a sound,
I've run his Wizard out of spells
And want to hear his anguished yells".

What kind of business could this be
When all there was that I could see
Were envelopes on every wall,
And games stacked high as I am tall?

And in a corner crouched six fools,
Four of whom could pass as ghouls;
While the one they must have robbed,
with bowed head just sat and sobbed.

"Let's take a break" the sixth one said,
"While I try to make some bread";
Then turning to me with a lear,
Said "I think we have a live one here".

Too late to dash across the floor,
They'd formed a blockade at the door;
So in a voice that was almost a babble,
I asked them for a game of Scrabble.

"Come on now friend" the owner sneered,
(Adding to my other fears);
"That game is not for you and I,
I've something better for you to buy".

"You look to me like World War II,
And Panzerblitz should be for you;
But should you be a SciFi fan
I've games enough to fill your van".

Game by game, he showed them all,
From ancient Rome to Tolbruk's fall;
Then from Mid-World to outer space,
And those who fight with sword and mace.

Until with senses overcome,
I had spent a goodly sum;
Buying all he said to try,
From Metagaming to SPI.

And now at last, I'm homeward bound
Having left them with a frown,
They said "Let's play" and I said "Naw",
"I'm going home to play with my mother-in-law".

Letters to the Editor

The ICE WAR article in TSG 20 contained a typo. Rule 21.3 states: *US initial forces subs may be committed to the map during the US Sub phase of any turn after release of reinforcements.* This should read: *US initial forces subs may be committed to the map during the Sub phase of any turn. US reinforcement subs may be committed during the Sub phase of any turn after the release of reinforcements (see 17.3).*

Also, the rules for OLYMPICA (which I edited) contain an error, due to minor differences between the designer's mapboard and the production version. Rules 4.2, 4.3, 5.2, and 13.2 list the hexes for the fixed-placement tunnels as 1717, 1818, 1010, and 1009. These should be 1717, 1818, 1010, *and 1011.*

Keith Gross
Austin, TX

I discovered the standard snipe at SWORDS AND SORCERY in an article about a game based on an extremely mature and well thought out science fiction television show (STAR TREK); the program may not qualify as childish, but as serious science fiction it does leave something to be desired. It's not that I'm paranoid, it's just that I am aware of THE SPACE GAMER'S policy to get me and the company I work for.

In a more serious vein, the contention that STARSHIPS AND SPACEMEN allows for sexual equality by compensating female characters with increased "Charisma" and "Psionic Power" in return for lesser "Strength" is ludicrous. In the first place, why do women have greater Charisma? Just because the current society in which we live places much more value on female physical beauty than on male physical beauty does not mean that females are intrinsically more charismatic than males. And the differentiation of male and female characters on the basis of any unproven physical or mental difference points out a sad lacking in design perspective rampant in this hobby. Any student of role-playing games can prove women are more beautiful (or handsome) than men, but less strong. Who is stereotyping whom? I suppose I will have to endure several articles detailing the ability of women to "seduce" men before this silliness is exorcised from the hobby, but at least the designers could be sexist along conventional and currently acceptable lines (witches versus wizards). And besides, the lead characters in STAR TREK who were most charismatic were male.

Your "Inside Humor" column was probably funny, but since I am not allowed to laugh by company policy at any article which might be construed as pointed at the firm, I am not sure. It might interest you to know that the copy you have of CREATURE in your files has very little resemblance to the product which will be available shortly. To my mind, it is certainly the best game of the four, and doesn't even look like a giant tank.

Chacun á son goût.

Eric Goldberg
SPI, New York

Dialogues between artist and critic tend to be unutterably boring and I do not intend to initiate a multi-chapter discussion via this letter. However, I think it wise to make some reply to Eric Goldberg's letter in TSG no.20, in which he takes exception with my review of his SWORDS AND SORCERY design. Whatever specific defense he wishes to make for S&S is his affair, of course, and it would be futile to recapitulate old points. I would, however, like to make a couple of brief comments before proceeding to the primary issue raised by Eric's letter.

First, despite the fact that Eric says that he doesn't "know one way or another" whether the humorous approach was proper in the context of S&S, he cannot say that he did not have ample opportunity before the game entered print to "get sure". At least one playtester was not amused by the game and said so. As a consequence, Eric said that he and Greg Costikyan were going over the game one more time with "an extremely critical eye, to make sure our intentions cannot be misread" (see S&T no.68/WORKS IN PROGRESS). So what happened? I would also point out that SPI specifically condemns "high school humor and obvious smart-guy remarks" in its guidelines on manuscript style (see WARGAME DESIGN, page 186, case 1.66-I assume that what applies to game notes also applies even more so to the rules headings).

Regarding Eric's characterization of my comment concerning SPI staffers as "snide", I can only say that I did not intend it to be read that way (though I now realize that my assessment did come off as a sarcastic cheap shot). My apologies to the staff for that. I still maintain that SPI does not do nearly as good a job on SF-F topics as they do on historical topics, but I'll leave any speculation as to why that might be to someone else.

Eric's main point, though, is that I analyze the game on the basis of what I think it should have been and not on the basis of what it is trying to be. By Eric's standards, this is an incorrect approach which "misses the entire point of the game". Not only is it unfair to judge a game by such a standard, but, says Eric, the standard is probably not capable of achievement. Hmmmm.

In answer to this thesis, let me first say that I've never even heard of a critic (of any variety) who would allow himself

to be bound by the stictures which Eric sets down. The reviewer who says that a play bores him because the author and director have tried to be "terminally cute" is committing the same crime of which I am accused. The literary critic who says that a new novel is a "turgid bit of nonsense, leaping from one poorly developed theme to the next" is saying nothing very different from what I said about S&S. Regardless of what Eric thinks makes good criticism, critics always have and always will look at what a play or a novel or a simulation might have been if the concept of the work had been given a little more thought. To say that the critic should limit himself to a dissection of mechanics in relation to goals is absurd. The question of whether the goals set for a work are proper or achievable is an essential question in all criticism. In the case of S&S, my central thesis was that the sort of experience which I as a consumer desired and expected when I ordered the item was lacking in the event precisely because the conceptualization of S&S was not sufficient for the amount of time, money and print expended. This approach is perfectly legitimate.

As for missing the entire point of the game, I regret to say that I got the point driven home quite forcefully. The problem from my angle was not a failure of understanding, but a fundamental disagreement as to whether or not the point of the game was worthy of being made. . .at least in that manner and at that price. I do not believe that the Feedback on a game concept constitutes or should constitute an inviolable straight jacket. Nor do I believe that such Feedback necessarily defines the parameters within which a game should exist. Such definition is the responsibility of the designer. He may want to stick as closely as possible to what got a favorable Feedback response initially, but from what I have seen of the way SPI operates, there is a not inconsiderable amount of latitude involved in a designer's choice of how to do his job. As for Eric's citing the text of the Feedback question on S&S as proof that the game achieved its intent, I should like to point out that he is simply begging the question of whether or not he properly narrowed down his subject matter and got a grasp on his data. Simply because the initial concept of a game sets certain parameters does not mean that you have to design out to the capacity of your subject.

Finally, Eric contends that my concept of what constitutes a good fantasy game is, if not unproducable, at least unproduced. Simple rot! There are any number of fantasy offerings on the market which, whatever their other faults, show the very integrity of concept and grasp of material which I indicted S&S for lacking. SPI's own WAR OF THE RING is a nicely conceived and fully developed item of the sort I expressed a desire to see. DIXIE may never rank as an all-time favorite game of anybody, but it was an integrated effort. Metagaming's TFT Micro's, are well thought-out systems, capable of much reinterpretation, but also capable of use as self-enclosed, integrated games. But, perhaps the best examples of what can be done with the fantasy genre are WHITE BEAR AND RED MOON and NOMAD GODS, both of which embody high standards both of literature and of gaming. The question was and remains, is a small outfit like CHAOSIUM can do it, why couldn't SPI?

David James Ritchie
Grove City, PA

I was pleased that my PSIONICS IN TRAVELLER article appeared in TSG no.20; this feeling of pleasure came to an abrupt end, though, when I noticed some mistakes I had made in the article. The mistakes, along with the proper corrections, are as follows:

1. PSIONIC INSTITUTE ERROR— Psionic Institute branches can only exist on planets that have a population level of 9+ or a technology level of *12+,* not 18+ as I previously stated. At the time I wrote it I thought you rolled two six-sided dice to determine a planet's technology level; in reality, you are supposed to roll one.

2. MIND-CONTROL ERROR— In the second column of page eleven under the mind-control section close to the bottom of the page exists the statement *"the ability of mind-control lasts as long as the telepath is rendered unconscious for twelve hours."* Ignore this statement entirely; pretend it was never written; cross it out with ink or erase it. How it got there I'm not certain, maybe it was gremlins.

3. PSIONIC DEVICES ERROR— The three categories that psionic devices fall into are (a) those that allow a character the use of a certain psionic ability but no psionic strength points to make use of the ability, (b) those that allow a character a certain number of psionic strength points but no psionic abilities to expend the psionic strength points on, and (c) those devices that allow a character the usage of a certain psionic ability plus the necessary psionic strength points to perform the psionic ability with. In the original article I left out the "b" type devices.

Hopefully, this letter will straighten out any confusion that may arise from the PSIONICS IN TRAVELLER article. Remember, for telekinetic purposes, one kilogram equals two and two tenths pounds, and one megagram equals two thousand two hundred pounds.

Kenneth W. Burke
West Hartford, CT

I have enjoyed your magazine principally because of the enthusiasm, both for science fiction and for gaming, that seems to characterize most of the writers. With rare exception those writing about games that I know seem to comprehend the purpose of those games and are able to comment intelligently upon them (a rare exception to this was "TRAVELLER: Addendum Equipment & Weapons" by Barger in No. 18. Mr. Barger seems to underestimate the importance of technical levels as the equipment that he describes would be far past the capabilities of planets in the designer created universe although they well might fit in another). As to the future of the magazine: the simple fact is that I am paying a high price (about 5 cents/page of text) for the magazine and what I want is a continuation of the articles about games and reviews and discussions of the games available. Fiction, especially bad fiction, I can find at a cheaper price elsewhere; articles as valuable as "Referee, Declare Thyself!" (No. 18) or "Psionics in TRAVELLER" (No. 20) are rare even in gaming magazines. Most other magazines I buy at a newsstand after a quick run-through to see whether there is something of value in it for me or not; change the format of TSG radically or start that miserable fiction again and I am likely to demote it to that level. The hardest part of the survey was rating the game companies. Any company that produces multiple games produces some duds. How is one to combine the ratings for effort, production values, and final product into one, almost meaningless score? There are probably some manufactures that will not get my money unless I have played the game elsewhere and liked it and some, a very few, that will get my money based on past performance. Most purchasing that I do will be based not on the maker but on a close look at the game and, if possible, some good reviews (and by this I do not mean favorable reviews, but reviews that take a close look at the game and explain its assumptions, problems, play mechanics, and good points and attempt to evaluate its interest to the average gamer).

As a minor quibble about the survey I would like to object to SWORDS & SORCERY being cast as a role playing game. I have it; I play it; I like it; and it is a board game pure and simple. I also feel that GDW's ILIAD should have been included as a fantasy board game. The assumption of the game is that the gods did have an effect on the events rather than being a 'simluation' of the bronze age commerce raiding that was the historical reality.

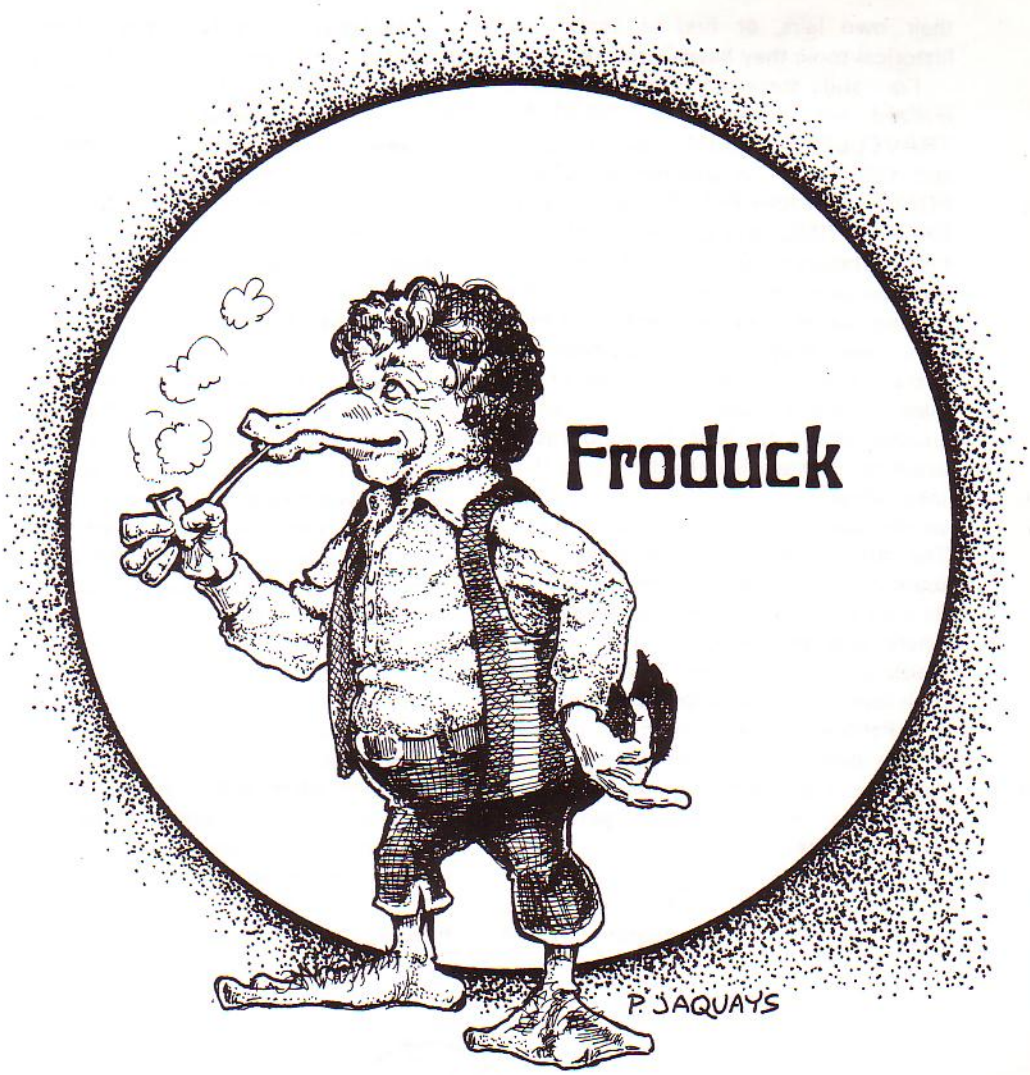
Yale F. Edeiken
Chicago, IL

Mike Crane's "Hazards of Wargaming" is an intriguing, very confused article. Even given that Mike was attempting to write a humorous piece, the illogic of his statements is no less serious than in a critical tract. He asks if "anyone ever actually understands" big, complex games or "even understands the rules?" Sure they do. Some of the big games (e.g. TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD, WAR IN EUROPE, and--what I suspect is the subject of his play session, SWORDS & SORCERY) have been discussed at length in the wargame press by intelligent, incisive customers who readily digested and mastered the games. Big games

are not for everyone; they require time, energy, work, and the desire to learn something from the game. Playing a battalion/company level game of the Battle of the Bulge is exhausting, but you can't gain an understanding of how the nature of the tactical combat determined the strategic outcome by playing a Folio game on the Bulge. Mike complains that his game has no "standard" scenario. Why should a fantasy game have a "standard" scenario? What's wrong with having a multiplicity of scenarios to choose from, assuming the developer has had enough time to develop all the scenarios properly (an admittedly big assumption)? Mike and his buddies seemed to have a lot of trouble coping with the rules; they kept screwing up and having to start over again. They spent hours arguing over which scenario to play, which optional rules to play, how to interpret rules. One of the guys cheated, which indicates an impressive lack of integrity--why go through this whole process if you're going to prostitute the results? What have you learned? Mike bitches that the rules use precise, technical language. I assure Mike that writing precise technical language, trying to cover the loopholes (and never quite succeeding) is a hell of a lot less fun than reading it. But we do it for guys like Mike and his buddies--who are incapable of settling their disputes through common sense and concilliation. Can you imagine how Mike's nightmarish session would have gone with sloppy, loose rules of the famous, classic "Use any reasonable supply rule" sort? Sure, it takes time to get used to reading long, complex rules; you're learning a new language. Kids don't start out on CRIME & PUNISHMENT; Mike obviously isn't experienced enough with wargames to be playing complex ones. I am not calling Mike dumb; I am not saying rules-writing is a perfectly developed art. Both need more work.

To sum up, to judge that big games are a waste of time because Mike and his buddies had a bad experience--compounded by their inexperience, inability to make decisions, sloppy rules reading, and cheating--would be foolish. What can we all learn from this? That playing a big game takes effort in order to have fun and learn from it, and that not everyone is capable of devoting this effort to playing big games. As for me--I don't have the time these days, which is why I play Micros. And, like Mike, I drink.

Phil Kosnett
Cambridge, MA



I have brought Allen Varney's POND WAR (TSG no.19) to the attention of a friend of mine. He assures me that he will give Mr. Varney's idea careful consideration. He has already sent two representatives of his, er, company to talk to Mr. Varney about POND WAR (to express their interest in his idea, they are bringing him a nice, white, er, jacket for him to try on). They should arrive shortly. In the meantime, keep him as quiet as possible; don't let him become excited (tie him up if you have to).

Sympathetically,

Leland Erickson
Menlo Park, Calif.

I'm dismayed at your announcement of a possible venture into historical games. There are so many companies turning out so many good games that your joining in doesn't hold much promise of impact or profit. Metagaming is the only company that concentrates on science fiction and fantasy boardgames. Others dabble in the area, but only GDW consistently produces solid games. Serious sci-fi gamers can only lament any sidetracking of your efforts into historical games. Already STELLER CONQUEST and OGRE set the standard of excellence in concept and rules, but not yet in components, for science fiction simulations. When and if I see a regular game by Metagaming, I can only think of the resources that could have been put to better use in upgrading the graphics, playtesting and other facets of your bread and butter: sci-fi and fantasy games. Besides, I doubt you can match GDW, AH, or SPI for quite a while in

their own lairs, or find an interesting historical topic they haven't covered.

I'm still surprised gamers haven't realized why games like IMPERIUM, TRAVELLER, STELLAR CONQUEST, and OGRE are so superior to STARFORCE, STARSHIP TROOPERS, WAR OF THE RING, and OUTREACH. The first are labors of love polished into gems. The designers have let the rest of the playing public onto the same game they have been playing for enjoyment for years. The latter group consists of the mass produced bash. They're either another effort to beat the publication deadline, to maximize the dollars; or they take advantage of a big name novel, which doesn't guarantee a good game. The difference is between games with sparkling personality, humor, and a defined theme and those flavorless games where players methodically push their pieces around or at best STALINGRAD with lasers and spaceships instead of rifles and Panthers. Metagaming has put out a high proportion of games in the first category; I am just afraid that devoting your resources to historical games will jeopardize that.

Roberto Camino
Huntington Park, CA

This letter is in reply to that of Ben V. Kloepper, which appeared in TSG no.19.

There seems to be a misunderstanding as to the potential benefits of Oriental weaponry in MELEE. These benefits are only meant to accrue to a character specifically trained in the weapon, and are meant to be compared against a "standard" weapon from the MELEE list. A Katana is not meant to be a magic sword, as Ben suggests. (By the way, my first name is Ronald, misspelling in future will result in the evildoer having to commit ritual suicide with his Wakizashi) My statement was that "Samurai tended to strike at the vital areas with precision," and that was meant to apply to a Samurai Warrior of given DX as compared to any other character of the same DX who is hacking away with a heavy broadsword and hoping for the best.

Giving a beginning Samurai figure a greater amount of starting attributes just makes the Samurai a basically tougher foe who is in no way different than any other MELEE figure. The Samurai would then be equally adept with a standard broadsword as with his Katana. This is not supposed to be the case! A given Samurai Warrior may be no greater DX than a foe, but if armed with a Katana against the heavier broadsword - wielded with muscle rather than skill - the Samurai will strike more often and more accurately. It is a combination of Samurai training and a superior sword. A figure untrained in Katana just has a broadsword for game purposes; needing the same ST, doing the same damage, and not gaining the +1 to DX.

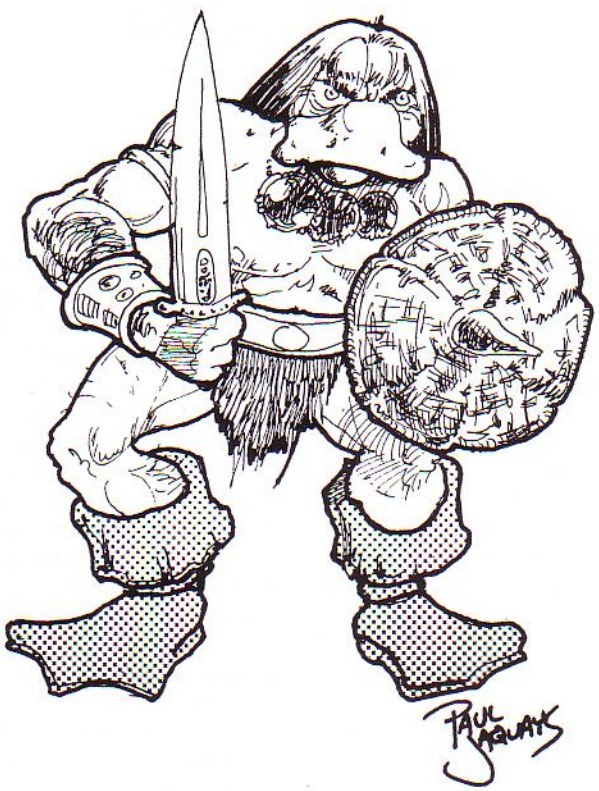
The same rationale applies to the use of other Oriental weaponry. A Sai in untrained hands is just a big, blunt knife. Rotating a Tonfa allows it to be a parrying weapon, so it absorbs damage just fashion analogous to a MELEE maingauche. If you don't know how to use it properly, all you've got is a club. A figure expressly stated as being trained in Tonfa does not necessarily have greater DX which would then allow more effective chances "to hit" with an ordinary club.

By deleting the extra benefits of oriental weaponry, Ben removes the point of using them. Why should a figure use a Bokken in practice combat when a club gives the same damage using less ST? On the other hand, declaring that all you need is higher DX to gain the benefits only means that you have added superior new weapons to the MELEE chart and destroyed the tactical choice on which the game is based. (If a weapon takes higher ST cost as it does higher damage, then players must choose between figures with high ST which do greater damage or figures with high DX which hit more often) DX becomes the key factor instead of one of the two equal, balanced criteria.

The suggestion that deflection of arrows should be on 5 dice rather than 4 is a judgment call. Again, this was meant to apply to the fantasy martial artist not any particular historical Warrior.

The suggestion that IQ should be directly related to accuracy is downright marvelous! This should apply to all Warriors, and is especially useful in giving IQ a meaningful concept in MELEE. Hitherto, it has only been important in WIZARD. Perhaps that is intentional, and forcing MELEE-only figures to worry about IQ unbalances that game, but I'll leave that to Steve Jackson to decide. In any event, I would put forth my own judgment call that -1 "to hit" for every 2 IQ over 10 will make it too easy for heavily armored characters to score and the minimum IQ for this benefit should be substantially higher. Naturally, Wizards would not be entitled to increased weapon accuracy.

Ronald Pehr
Albany, NY



DUCKMAN

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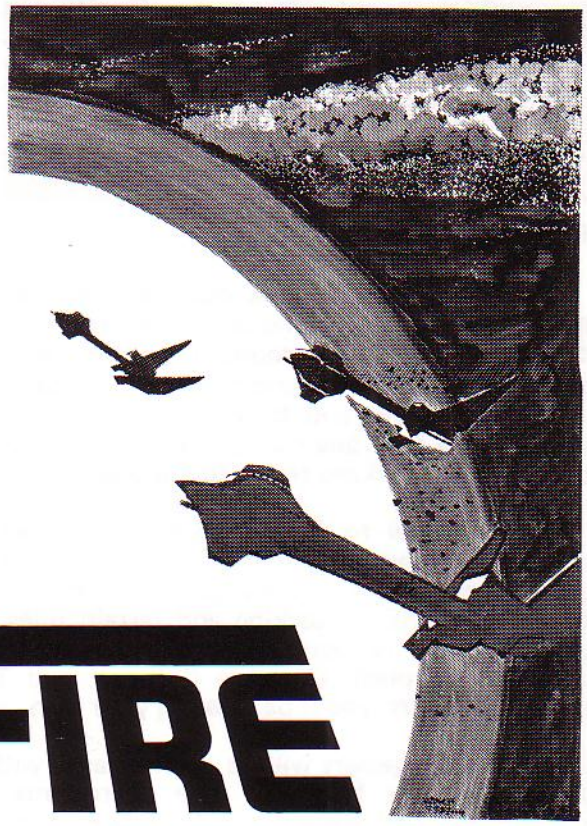
Fight for control of a globular cluster — build, research, and explore. Victory will go to the player who makes best use of the available resources to outbuild and outguess his (or her) rivals.

The new boxed edition of STELLAR CONQUEST includes 480 counters, 17" x 22" full-color map, rules book, star cards, data sheets, and record sheets. The price is only $12.95 – $11.50 for THE SPACE GAMER subscribers.

Game design by Howard Thompson; cover art by Kelly Freas.

GODSFIRE



When it first appeared, GODSFIRE was hailed as the best political/economic SF game ever designed. Now in a new boxed edition — complete with beautiful full-color cover by Rick Sternbach and enough components for 8 players — GODSFIRE is a "must" for the skilled gamer.

GODSFIRE is two games in one. The basic version is a battle game, with space fleets and ground forces fighting for control of fifteen planets. A unique movement system makes true three-dimensional movement easy.

The advanced game adds diplomacy, subversion, politics — and the chance of Armageddon. Before you go to war, you'll have to gain support from internal political and economic interests (by fair treatment, negotiation, bribery, or force) — or face revolution.

Components include two giant 22" by 34" strategic maps, 15 System Sheets and 6 National Government Sheets; 960 unit counters; 616 Gigabuck counters; and the rule booklet.

Playing time ranges from two hours to all day, depending on the scenario (from 2 to 15 players) that you choose.

Designed by Lynn Willis; edited by Steve Jackson; cover art by Rick Sternbach.

GODSFIRE sells for $15.95 — or $14.00 for The Space Gamer subscribers.

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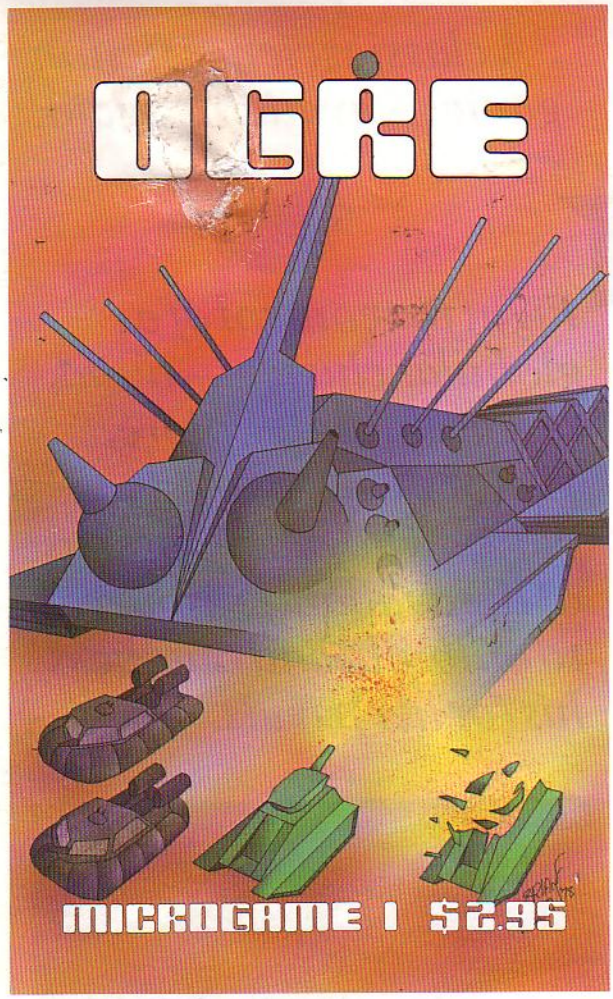

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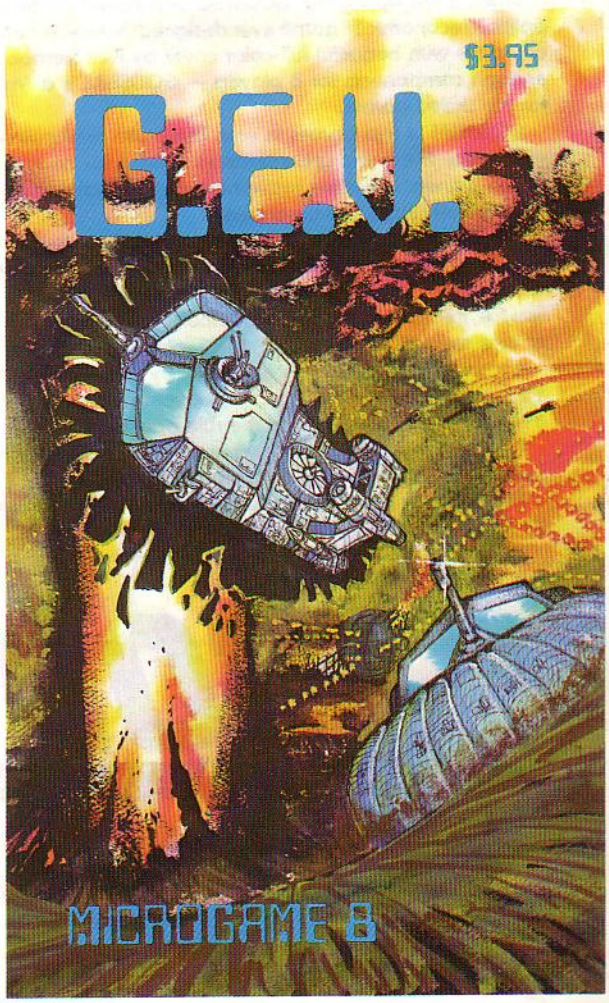

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G.E.V., sequel to OGRE, adds more detail to Metagaming's fast-moving simulation of armored combat in the next century. G.E.V. is a new game, but its wholly compatible with OGRE. Stacking and terrain rules, new unit types, the Mark IV Ogre, and more. . . Scenarios include Raid, Breakthrough, Ceasefire Collapse, and The Train. And within hours, you'll be creating your own.

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Components include:
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- *12" x 14" three color terrain map
- *135 unit play counters

OGRE and G.E.V. are available at your local hobby, toy, and book stores–ask for them. OGRE is $2.95 and G.E.V. is $3.95 when ordered directly from Metagaming. Subscribers to THE SPACE GAMER pay $2.50 for OGRE and $3.50 for G.E.V. There is a 50-cent required postage fee for each mail order.

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